

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Dutch minister urges Mideast cooperation

DAMASCUS (R) — Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek told Syria on Tuesday that Israel and the Arabs had to cooperate to make the Middle East peace talks successful as failure would be catastrophic for the world. Mr. Van den Broek, who attended last year's Madrid peace conference on behalf of the European Community (EC), stressed the importance of the peace process during talks with his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Sharra, officials and diplomats said. "Failure of the negotiations would be a failure for us all. It would have catastrophic effects on the world community," Mr. Van den Broek said in a statement on arrival. Mr. Sharra, speaking at the airport, said the atmosphere of the third round of Arab-Israeli talks which opened in Washington on Monday was not encouraging. "We have learned the Israeli team would leave Washington either on Wednesday or Thursday and that the talks would end only with the next venue for the talks," he said. "We believe this is a proof that they are not serious in having the talks produce results." Mr. Van den Broek, who also discussed bilateral relations with Mr. Sharra, will visit Jordan and Israel as well as the occupied territories.

Volume 17 Number 4906

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1992, RAGAB 10, 1412

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

King visits Prime Ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday visited the Prime Ministry and met with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Bakher. King Hussein issued to Sharif Zeid directives on several issues. The meeting was attended by the King's military secretary, His Royal Highness Prince Talal bin Mohammad. Earlier the King visited the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces.

Soviet immigrants shun Israeli army

TEL AVIV (R) — Half Israel's soviet immigrants at the mandatory draft age show little enthusiasm for serving in the army, the newspaper Maariv said on Tuesday quoting from an army survey. Only 26 per cent of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union aged 17-23 showed a high degree of willingness to serve in the army compared to 96 per cent of other people of conscription age, the survey said. Fifty per cent said they did not want to join the army at all or showed very little motivation. Maariv said the survey raised serious concerns within the army.

Swiss court refuses to free Iranian

LAUSANNE (AP) — Swiss authorities said Tuesday that an Iranian arrested on suspicion of involvement in the murder of former Iranian Premier Shahpour Bakhtiar must remain in custody. The supreme court rejected Zeynal Sarhadi's appeal for release from jail because of the "considerable risk" that he would flee Switzerland, according to a justice ministry statement.

Yazdi urges civil trials for political prisoners

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's judiciary chief has ruled that civil courts instead of revolutionary tribunals judge defendants charged with political offenses, the official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Tuesday. It quoted Mohammad Yazdi as saying opponents of the government as well as members of the press charged with political offenses will be defended by lawyers and tried before a judge and two assessors. His comments came in a meeting Monday with Mohammad Mohtasen Sazgara, head of Iran's press cooperative, IRNA said. Most of the major cases in Iran are judged by special Islamic courts.

Ancient corpse seized from bandits

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian security forces have arrested bandits who had unearthed an ancient mummy and tried to sell it to an unnamed European embassy in Tehran for shipment abroad, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Tuesday. The agency said the European embassy had offered five billion rials for the embalmed corpse. That amounts to \$71 million on the official rate of exchange, or \$3.5 million on the blackmarket. Undercover agents, arranged to buy the cadaver for 750 million rials, officially \$10.7 million and unofficially \$335,000, said IRNA. It did not explain why the bandits agreed to sell it for a price much lower than what the embassy allegedly offered.

Djibouti minister protests handling of rebellion

DJIBOUTI (R) — Djibouti's health minister resigned Tuesday in protest against government attempts to crush a rebellion by Afar tribesmen in the north of the Red Sea republic. "The fight for democracy is determined at the political level and not by arms," Mohammed Djama Elabac said in a letter of resignation released to journalists. "The logic of war seems for the present and future to prevail over a political choice." There was no immediate government reaction. Government troops have been trying for eight weeks to stanch a campaign by guerrillas of the Afar-led front for the Restoration of Democracy.

Formal Mideast bilateral talks begin

Negotiations start on Jordanian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli tracks

From George Hawatmeh in Washington

JORDANIAN AND Israeli delegates held their first session of formal bilateral talks Tuesday, having reached agreement on separate Jordanian and Palestinian representation on Monday, with both sides limiting their deliberations to outlining their own visions of peace in the Middle East region.

The Palestinians were scheduled to hold their second session of bilateral negotiations with the Israelis later in the afternoon, and both sides expected the session to be "tough" following the attack outside Ramallah Tuesday in which a number of Israelis were injured (see story below).

The Israelis raised the Ramallah operation in their talks with their

Jordanian counterparts, but the chief Israeli delegate to the negotiations with the Jordanians and Palestinians, Eliazkin Rubenstein, said in a statement later that the incident will not affect the conduct of the talks.

In the morning session, held at the U.S. State Department, chief Jordanian delegate Abdul Salam Majali outlined Jordan's vision for peace in the region. He said peace, when it was made, had to be comprehensive, just and enduring. He included in his outline Jordan's interpretation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, raised the issues of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories as well as water, refugees and Jordanian territories occupied by Israel.

"The Israeli negotiators told us they were deeply interested in hearing our position first hand, and formally for the first time," a Jordanian delegate said. "But, clearly, there was a wide gap between our perceptions of peace at this stage."

Another Jordanian delegate described the session as an exercise "in sizing up each other," adding that it was too early in the process to speak of progress and negotiating substantial matter with the Israelis. "The real focus is on issues between the Palestinians and the Israelis at this stage," the delegate said. "Those issues also are on doubt of great concern to us, and whether we like it or not we end up talking about them."

Dr. Majali and Mr. Rubenstein scheduled their delegations' next meeting for Wednesday morning, and it was possible that the second session would tackle the issue of venue when and where to hold the next round — which has been a source of contention for both sides.

"The Israelis wanted to discuss the issue today," according to a senior Jordanian delegate. "But we have refused to discuss the matter before progress is made in this round," he said. "The Israelis simply cannot take a unilateral decision on this or any other point, and expect us to go along with them. We made it that in clear in the 'general meeting' yesterday."

The first of those "general meetings," which were agreed upon as a substitute for the plenary sessions of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and the Israeli delegation, was held at 5 p.m. Monday, and was followed by the first Palestinian-Israeli formal encounter.

In that "general meeting," the three heads of delegations exchanged opening remarks and introduced members of their teams to the others. Dr. Majali described the meeting as "good" and one in which procedure for holding talks in the two tracks was discussed and agreed upon.

In commenting on the first formal Palestinian-Israeli session, Haidar Abdul Shafi, head of the Palestinian team, said the meeting was "not exciting but businesslike."

Opening remarks were exchanged in that meeting, which lasted for 90 minutes, but beyond that the Palestinians banded to the Israelis a letter which contained "basic principles" of the Palestinian position.

The Palestinians, according to informed sources, proposed a detailed agenda for their talks with Israel; but the Israelis submitted their own agenda, which was unacceptable to either the Jordanians and Palestinians, since it was originally proposed for the two tracks together.

In the Tuesday afternoon session, each side was expected to come up with new proposals for the agenda, which the Israelis insist should not go beyond arrangements for interim government rule in the occupied territories.

Include such issues as the implementation of Resolution 242, self-determination, settlements, Jerusalem, land and water in talks on self-government, should the Israelis insist on their position of putting no more than the interim arrangements for autonomy on the agenda.

Two Jordanian delegates attended the Israeli-Palestinian meeting yesterday, along with nine Palestinians and the Israelis, in keeping with the agreement reached to break the impasse of separating the two tracks. They were Dr. Fayez Tarawneh and Mr. Awn Khasawneh.

Palestinian delegates attending Jordanian-Israeli talks Tuesday were Dr. Nabil Jaabari and Dr. Abdul Rahman Hamad.

In describing the agreement Monday, spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation Dr. Hanan Ashrawi welcomed the end of corridor diplomacy and said the Palestinians were quite heartened by the fact that the Israelis did finally recognize the necessity of

the two-track approach and that they did accept direct negotiations with the Palestinians on the Israeli-Palestinian track and with the Jordanians on the Jordanian-Israeli track.

On the question of the \$10 billion in loan guarantees to Israel, Dr. Ashrawi was asked whether she saw a basis for the continuation of the peace process if the Bush administration decided to go ahead and grant the loan guarantees to Israel.

If the administration on Congress do that," she said, the Palestinians would have to evaluate the situation "very seriously" because "we will view this as a direct affront to the integrity of the peace process and to the rights of the Palestinians."

Dr. Ashrawi expressed what some would describe as unrealistic confidence that the U.S. will not allow its funds to be used to maintain Israel's settlement activity. "American public

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Jordan calls for review of status of Palestinians in Arab countries

By Salameh Ne'matt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan has called for a review of the status of Palestinians living in Arab countries, including the possibility of granting them dual nationalities to ensure their rights and ease their suffering.

In an interview with the London-based Al Hayat newspaper published Wednesday, His Majesty King Hussein said it was "inconceivable" that Jews can "enjoy Israeli nationality in addition to that of another country while the situation continues as it is for Palestinian Arabs in the Arab World."

The King, in reply to a question on a proposal under which Palestinians living in the Arab World could have dual nationalities, said that United Nations resolutions clearly state that Palestinians outside the occupied territories have the right to return to Palestine or be compensated.

"The Israelis may, from their side,

raise the issue of Jews who left Arab countries and moved to Israel," the King said. "And here, there may be a possibility to deal with this problem by proposing their return to these countries from which they emigrated."

The King drew a distinction between Palestinians in the occupied territories and those outside in the context of negotiating the final status of Palestinians. "It is not feasible that Palestinians inside the occupied territories negotiate issues that go beyond these territories," he said.

He pointed out that Palestinians in Kuwait "have no rights, despite serving there for generations."

"This situation needs to be tackled so that they can obtain psychological stability and gain their rights," he said. Nearly 300,000 Palestinians, mostly from Kuwait, returned to Jordan over the last year.

The King stressed Jordan would attend the proposed multilateral talks expected to convene in Moscow on Jan. 28 to tackle regional issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He said the multilateral talks, which will discuss the problem of refugees, water and disarmament, were "a bigger conference than the one called for by the Arab Nation."

Assessing the situation in the Arab World in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, the King said the Arab World was "going through a transitional phase," stressing that "you certainly cannot call it a comfortable situation."

On Jordan's role in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over interim self-government in the occupied territories, the King said Jordan's role was to "support our Palestinian brothers."

He pointed out, however, that there was no agreement yet with the Palestinian side on the future of the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship in the context of a peaceful settlement.

He recognized that Jordan was "suffering great pressures" in pursuing peace talks with Israel, in an apparent reference to the economic crisis that resulted mainly from the

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Iraq said to admit nuclear bomb plans

BAHRAIN (AP) — Iraq has acknowledged for the first time that it built a large uranium-enrichment programme, suitable for production of nuclear bombs, a senior U.N. inspector said Tuesday.

"The significance of this and most important (thing) is that Iraq acknowledged it has been pursuing a production-scale centrifuge enrichment programme rather than simply a research programme," said the official, Robert Gallucci.

"We don't have evidence they operated the machines, but we're not saying that they did not," said Mr. Gallucci, the second-ranking official on the U.N. special commission charged with the inspections.

He spoke in Bahrain on return from the latest inspection trip to Iraq. Earlier, a U.N. expert told reporters in New York that he thought Iraq might have had the means to build four nuclear bombs a year using a large-scale, sophisticated system for

enriching uranium.

Mr. Gallucci said in Bahrain that the Iraqis acknowledged they had imported the components from Germany for a large-scale centrifuge system.

But they now have destroyed the components and showed the resultant debris to the inspectors earlier Tuesday, broken down into "steel slabs" and "fine remains," Mr. Gallucci said.

The team did some sampling on the site and will be analysing more at the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), he said.

In New York, David Dorn, a nuclear expert with the U.N. inspectors commission, told reporters Iraq admitted it had imported components from Germany for a centrifuge system.

The inspectors first presented Iraqi officials with evidence from Western intelligence officials that Iraq had developed the centrifuge programme.

Rightists threaten to bolt Shamir coalition

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Right-wing coalition parties on Tuesday threatened to bolt the government if self-rule was offered to Palestinians at Mideast peace talks in Washington.

Withdrawal of the far-right Moleider and Tzohar parties could bring down Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's cabinet and halt the peace talks while new elections are held.

Israeli delegation members insisted that discussions in Washington centre only on the agenda for the next round of talks, with Tzohar and Moleider expressing fears Israel already has presented a document

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Course of Algerian events poses dilemma for Jordan politicians

By Lamiet K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The cancellation of parliamentary elections in Algeria by the army has raised serious concern here about the revival of military dictatorships at the expense of prospects for democracy in the Arab World.

At the same time, many politicians from the various political trends also express fear that the potential ascendancy to power by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), if elections were to be held, could also lead to the liquidation of political pluralism.

Therefore, politicians and intellectuals from left to right in Jordan found themselves facing a very delicate question since the military-backed High Security Council took power in Algeria. Is it right to halt a democratic process in order to stop a group that is believed to aim at ending pluralism once it gets to power?

The response to this question, to a large extent, determines the attitude of other trends, probably including

some in the government, vis-a-vis the influential Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan.

Although the political groups seem to differ on the extent of their concern of what they view as the Islamic fundamentalists' hostility to pluralism, the Algerian experiment has not provoked calls for a crackdown on the Islamists in Jordan.

If anything, Jordanian politicians seem to be more concerned over how to advance pluralism to avoid "the Algerian dilemma," even if some are convinced that an FIS control of power in Algeria would have produced a dictatorship.

Islamists, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, counter that the argument is unfounded that the FIS or any Islamic movement will never allow a democratic system once it gets to power. (The Islamic movement's views will be dealt with in a separate story).

Leftist and secular politicians agree that the claim is hypothetical despite reported FIS statements that "democracy amounts to blasphemy." Nevertheless, fears that the FIS could have

reversed the democratic experiment in Algeria have sparked debates within the ranks of the non-Islamic trends in the country.

There is a consensus that the military action in Algeria was a blow to democracy; some argue that it was not justified but others view it as a reaction to the undemocratic attitude demonstrated by the FIS.

Judging by interviews with politicians from the right to the left, the Algerian experiment has seriously alarmed Jordanians to the dangers of allowing confrontation between the seculars and Islamists and to the urgency of developing the democratic experiment in Jordan.

"We're deeply alarmed by what is happening in Algeria. The will of the Algerian people should have been respected regardless of the results of the elections," said Taysir Al Zabiri, leader of the Leftist Jordan People's Democratic Party (JPDF).

But Mr. Zabiri also argues that pluralism should be respected by all parties and no party should use the

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6 Israelis wounded in West Bank attack

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Unidentified assailants shot and wounded six Israelis on Tuesday in a dusk attack on a bus and car in the occupied West Bank.

The wounded included a soldier from the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba near the West Bank town of Hebron, reports said.

None of the wounded were reported in serious condition. Israeli soldiers sealed off the area and began searches. The bus was about 20 kilometres out of Jerusalem, on its way to the settlement of Shiloh, when it was fired upon from about 200 metres away. Shots also hit a car following the bus.

Three settlers and one Israeli bus driver have been shot dead in ambushes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the end of October, when the Middle East peace talks were launched.

Settlers have opened fire in Palestinian towns and damaged Arab property in reprisal for the series of shootings in the occupied territories.

Israeli sources said groups opposed to the U.S.-brokered peace talks were responsible for the attacks. The talks resumed in Washington Monday.

Tuesday's ambush at 'Ain Siniya village, near the town of Ramallah, followed a decision by Israeli military authorities to expel 12 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Appeals are being heard against the expulsion orders. Sources said two of the wounded had moderate injuries and the four others were lightly injured.

Their vehicles were ambushed on the main road through the north of the West Bank that is used by Palestinians as well as Jews who have been settled in fortified communities.

Settler spokesman Bob Lang demanded that Israel recall its peace negotiators from Washington in protest at the shootings.

The settlers oppose peace talks fearing they could lead to Israel returning the West Bank and Gaza for peace with the Arabs.

The first of the series of attacks — all in the early evening darkness — was on Oct. 28 when an Israeli settler from Shiloh and the driver of her bus were killed in the West Bank as they went to a rally to oppose peace talks.

In early December a Jewish settler was shot while driving near Ramallah and died a few days later.

The fourth Jewish settler came on Jan. 1, when a death in the Gaza Strip was killed.

Ramallah, which was placed under a round-the-clock curfew following the December shooting, is still under night curfew.

Government is committed to 'comprehensive development'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker has said that the government's main concern and basic policy would be to revive a comprehensive development process.

The basis for the government's efforts will be the positive results of the performance of the Jordanian economy in dealing with the impact of the Gulf crisis despite the numerous difficulties posed by the Kingdom's limited resources, Sharif Zeid was quoted as saying in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The revival of the development process and related socio-economic activities will be based on a general evaluation of the economy by the Economic Consultative Council, Sharif Zeid said.

He said the planned economic activities will open the door for entrepreneurs and will offer unrestricted options in investments, with the government assuming only an organisational and supervisory role to create the appropriate climate for production.

The government will also work on improving the infrastructure to serve the interests and aims of development projects, he said.

Sharif Zeid said that the government will give maximum attention to national production and seek enhanced relations and harmony among the various economic sectors, the productive capacity of the private sector with a view to bolstering the concept of self-reliance.

The government realises that some of Jordan's problems like unemployment, poverty, indebtedness and the environment are inter-related and cannot be dealt with a piece meal approach but through an integrated plan without overlooking any of these issues, the prime minister said.

Sharif Zeid said that the government was totally committed to minimising the consequences of undesired elements affecting the environment.

He also reiterated the government's emphasis on reforming the public administration system. It is one of the main priorities in compliance with the directives of His Majesty King Hussein in his letter to the government because reform is linked to and directly affecting the socio-economic development of the country, he said.

Sharif Zeid also stressed the government's keenness on supporting the judiciary providing all requirements for its success and speedy accomplishments of its work.

To ensure progress and continued stability, the prime minister said, security is needed as the main pillar that creates an opportune climate for investments.

He said that the armed forces and the public security shoulder tasks not restricted to the defence of the nation but are also involved in the very fabric of the national effort.

Prospects of emergency, ban on FIS seen in Algeria

Algeria gets new regime

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The six-man council which has taken control of Algeria may soon declare a partial state of emergency allowing it to ban the main Islamic fundamentalist party, according to various reports Tuesday.

Fearing possible civil warfare, several moderate politicians appealed to the fundamentalists and the government to seek peaceful solutions to the crisis.

The High Security Council, which includes Prime Minister Sidahmad Ghazali and three generals, took power Sunday and cancelled runoff elections set for Thursday that were expected to give the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) control of parliament.

Well-informed sources in Algiers, who requested anonymity, confirmed press reports that the council was considering imposing a "state of exception" that would permit the banning of the FIS or suspension of its political activities.

There was an immediate official comment on the reports. There also was a confirmation of reports that some FIS leaders had gone into hiding.

On Monday, the FIS leadership issued a communique denouncing the cancellation of elections as treason and urging all Algerians, including soldiers, to defy the new army-backed government. It said the front's followers should be on the alert, "ready for any eventuality."

The front described the security council members as "professional despots" who had no constitutional basis for running Algeria and who illegally pressured President Chadli Benjedid into resigning on Saturday. The military reportedly feared that Mr. Benjedid was willing to cooperate with a fundamentalist-controlled parliament.

The Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights said the security council's "brutal and unjustified" interruption of the democratic process was tantamount to a military coup d'etat.

Ali Ahmed Hocine, popular leader of the Liberal Front of Socialist Forces, urged the FIS and the government to "avoid civil war and reaffirm

their commitment to civil peace."

Algerians meanwhile braced for military rule and possible violence.

"Within the government, they are waiting to hear whether the FIS will take the historic chance of accepting compromise which could guarantee its legal existence," the daily newspaper Le Matin said.

"Otherwise its dissolution will be not far off."

After last month's first round vote, the fundamentalists had been poised to seize parliamentary power in the final ballot next Thursday.

On the streets of the capital on Tuesday, troops and tanks maintained guard on key government buildings but appeared at ease. Residents streamed to work, apparently following Mr. Ghazali's call for calm.

Foreign diplomats said the FIS leadership, already divided between hardliners and a moderate wing headed by Abdul Kader Hachani, faced a dilemma in reacting to the security council.

The FIS had to react harshly enough to satisfy its militant base yet not provide the authorities with reason to crack down, they added. Last November, gunmen killed

three border guards near the Tunisian border and the authorities indirectly liked them to the FIS. It rejected the charge but Mr. Hachani later said the party could not take responsibility for acts of individuals.

The U.S. State Department expressed concern at "the interruption of the electoral process."

"We commend the fact that Algeria has made impressive strides toward democracy in recent years, and we hope a way can be found to resume progress as soon as possible," it said Monday.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Twiliver trod carefully when asked about fears expressed by other countries that Islamic fundamentalism was on the rise in Algeria.

"We view the situation there with concern, the interruption of the electoral process," she told reporters.

Ms. Twiliver, urging that a peaceful resolution be found in accordance with the Algerian constitution, noted that the constitution "provides for the High Security Council to deal with all questions relating to public order and justice."

Iran renews efforts to free 2 Germans

BEIRUT (R) — Tehran has launched a fresh bid to free two German hostages held by pro-Iranian Lebanese captors, security sources said on Tuesday.

They said the move was at the request of the United Nations whose envoy Giandomenico Picco met Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati last week.

They discussed the fate of hostages Heinrich Struebig and Thomas Kempfner kidnapped in South Lebanon in May 1989. Mr. Picco won freedom for the last U.S. and British hostages in Lebanon last year.

The sources said Iranian officials in Beirut met members of the Hamadi family — relatives of brothers Abbas and Mohammad Ali Hamadi jailed in Germany for murder, air piracy and kidnappings.

"Iranian officials met three times with members from the Hamadi family over the past 10 days but no significant progress has been made," one source told Reuters.

He said the family refused to discuss the fate of the two German aid workers unless Germany first freed Abbas and Mohammad Ali.

Bonn has refused to swap them for the hostages.

"The Hamadis told the Iranians that any talk about the German hostages was out of the question before their relatives are freed and safely returned home," one security source said.

One pro-Iranian source said Bonn had rejected a compromise.

"The Germans were not positive at all. They even refused to give any guarantees that they will

free the two brothers in the future," the source said.

Mr. Struebig, 50, and Mr. Kempfner, 30, are thought to be held by the followers of the Hamadi's elder brother Abdul Hadi who is a senior security member of the Hizbollah (Party of God).

Hizbollah, believed to be the cover for clandestine kidnappings, denies any link to hostage-taking.

Mr. Picco, who had an unbroken record of freeing hostages each time he visited the Middle East in the past, failed in December to win the release of the Germans after talks in Tehran and Damascus — two key brokers in the Middle East hostage drama.

Mohammad Ali Hamadi was arrested in 1987 and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1989 for his part in hijacking a TWA passenger plane during which a U.S. navy diver was killed.

Abbas was jailed for 13 years in April 1988 for his part in the kidnapping of two German businessmen in Beirut in an attempt to win his brother's freedom.

In a bid to break the stalemate in the hostage saga, Mr. Picco is focusing his mediation on a swap of Arab prisoners for Israeli missing in Lebanon.

Pro-Iranian sources said Mr. Picco discussed the swap with Red Cross officials in Geneva last week.

Israel holds hundreds of Arabs at Khiam prison in South Lebanon. Groups in the country hold six missing Israeli servicemen or their remains.

Christians demand Israel protect church sites

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Christian leaders in the Holy Land demanded on Tuesday that Israel protect Christian sites in occupied Jerusalem, including a recently unearthed monastery slated to disappear under a new highway.

Heads of the nine main churches said in a statement they could seek "international protection" if the Israeli government failed to preserve the Holy City's Christian heritage.

Church officials said the leaders were referring to UNESCO. It was the first time the Christian community had mentioned such United Nations supervision.

Israel guarantees access to the holy places of all faiths in Jerusalem but many Christian archaeological sites have been lost while Jewish ones are preserved, the officials said.

The church leaders, who include the Latin, Greek and Armenian patriarchs, also condemned the seizure of Arab houses in the city's Silwan neighborhood by government-funded Jewish settlers last year.

"If no appropriate and satisfactory measures are taken to protect Christian archaeological sites, we will consider seeking international protection to preserve our universal Christian heritage," he said.

Many Christian sites are in Arab East Jerusalem.

Builders gouging the controversial road between ultra-orthodox Jewish and Arab neighborhoods uncovered a 6th century mosaic complex near the Old City's Damascus Gate last year.

The Greek Orthodox part of the complex has already been

paved over but an adjoining Armenian monastery and burial ground are hurriedly being excavated by the Israeli antiquities authority. Another Byzantine complex outside the Old City's Jaffa Gate was paved over last year to make way for a road and luxury apartments and offices.

The authority has already started removing an Armenian mosaic from the Damascus Gate complex, Israeli officials said. The authority will decide within three weeks whether to recommend the highway be diverted.

Ultra-orthodox Jews opposed to the excavation daubed black paint on a rare mosaic with a Greek inscription and rolled rocks on to graves at the site last month. They believe Jewish bones which must not be disturbed could lie beneath the Christian site.

The rocks are still on top of the excavation chamber and ultra-orthodox Jews watch over the dig to ensure they are not touched.

"The archaeological finds to the north of Damascus Gate... can be considered a landmark of early church history," Armenian Patriarch Torikman Manougian told Reuters.

"They are crucial for our understanding of the Christian and Armenian monastic presence in the Byzantine period. It is unthinkable that such sacred finds, so precious to our spiritual heritage, will disappear under a highway," he said.

An Israeli spokesman said the municipality would not comment until it had received the antiquities authorities report but it deplored the vandalism of the mosaic.

Knesset votes to bury controversial poll reform

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's parliament voted Monday to send a controversial electoral reform bill back to committee, further dashing hopes it would be passed before elections this year.

The move was seen as a victory for Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud bloc who oppose the bill for direct election of the prime minister.

Amid last-minute maneuvering, the Knesset (parliament) voted 60 to 54 to refer the bill back to the law committee, theoretically so that amendments could be incorporated into the bill.

Five legislators from the National Religious Party changed their minds and agreed to vote in favor of referring the bill to committee after receiving a written promise that it would be returned to the plenum for a vote within six weeks, Israel Television said.

Nevertheless, no time limit was formally attached to Monday's decision and initiators of the bill were pessimistic it would be brought back for ratification in time for next elections.

National elections are scheduled for Nov. 3. But far-right members of Mr. Shamir's cabinet have threatened to try to topple

the government and bring about elections as a way to halt Arab-Israeli peace talks if Israel moved towards ceding occupied land.

The 76-year-old Shamir, who according to some polls would lose to his Labour Party rivals or younger men in his own party in a direct vote for the prime minister, opposes electoral reform.

The electoral reform issue rose out of widespread protests over the financial and political horse-trading Mr. Shamir had to engage in 1991 to woo half a dozen small parties into his coalition.

Under Israel's present election system, the head of the party capable of forming a coalition is named prime minister. The reform proposed voters select a political party and, in a separate ballot, choose one of several candidates running for prime minister.

The proposed change is aimed at giving the prime minister a free hand in ruling the country, not bound by commitments to minority parties.

Also Monday Mr. Shamir's coalition weathered four no-confidence motions submitted by left-wing parties in protest of the growing poverty in Israel. The vote was 62 to 51 with two abstentions.

Ghali to hold separate talks with Vassiliou and Denktash

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Cypriot President George Vassiliou and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash will hold separate meetings here next week with the new U.N. secretary-general, a U.N. source said.

U.N. chief Boutros Ghali, who succeeded Javier Perez de Cuellar on Jan. 1, is scheduled to see Mr. Vassiliou on Jan. 20 and Mr. Denktash on Jan. 21. However, there is little likelihood the two Cypriot leaders themselves will meet, the source said.

They will discuss with Dr. Ghali long-standing U.N. efforts to reunite the divided island under a federal system of government.

Cyprus has been virtually partitioned since 1974 when Turkish troops occupied the northern third of the island after a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then-ruling Greece.

The last round of face-to-face talks here between Mr. Vassiliou and Mr. Denktash, under Mr. Perez de Cuellar's auspices, broke down in March 1990.

Mr. Denktash is president of the Turkish republic of northern Cyprus, established in 1983 but recognized only by Turkey.

He insists the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots are separate

peoples, each with the right of self-determination.

U.N. officials have made repeated trips during the past two years to Nicosia, as well as to Athens and Ankara, to try to get negotiations back on track.

In a report to the Security Council last month, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said he was disappointed that the Cyprus problem, in which he had been involved since 1975 before becoming secretary-general, remained unresolved, and that a shadow of uncertainty and insecurity continued to hang over the island.

But he said he was "encouraged by the conviction that the two communities will inevitably recognize that a mutually-acceptable solution is in their respective self-interest."

The Security Council issued a statement on Dec. 23 agreeing with Mr. Perez de Cuellar that a solution of the Cyprus problem was long overdue and that the mere maintenance of the status quo was not a solution.

Council members called on the leaders of the two Cypriot communities, and of Greece and Turkey, to devote their full energies to the early achievement of a solution.

Central Asia said opposing Afghan fundamentalism

ISLAMABAD (R) — The former Soviet republics of Central Asia do not want Muslim fundamentalist rule in neighboring Afghanistan, a Pakistani minister said Monday after visiting the region.

Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, minister of state for economic affairs, said the newly independent republics wanted Pakistan to work for a broad-based government in Kabul once the Afghan civil war was over, rather than a fundamentalist administration run by the Mujahideen guerrillas fighting the present government.

Pakistan, along with Western and some Arab states, has backed the guerrillas in the 13-year-old war against the Kabul government, which was supported by the now-dissolved Soviet Union.

Mr. Ali told reporters that leaders in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan wanted Afghan President Najibullah's ruling Watan party to be in the future govern-

ment.

"They have more in common with Najibullah than anyone else," said Mr. Ali, who visited the republics last month.

"They view Mujahideen as obscurantists and primitives who want to drive the country into tribalism. They said to us how can you not talk to Najibullah and want fundamentalists (to take power)."

Mr. Ali's remarks appeared to change the position of Pakistan, which in the past has publicly backed the guerrillas' opposition to sharing power with Mr. Najibullah.

Mr. Ali said Pakistan wanted all Afghan parties, including the Watan, to have a say in the future government.

But he said Pakistan had not changed its views about Mr. Najibullah as an individual and his delegation had told leaders in the five republics not to insist on his being in the future government.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Egypt, India call for reform of NAM

CAIRO (R) — Egypt and India on Monday urged the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to reform to enable it to tackle world problems. "The Non-Aligned Movement is not at its best today," Indian Foreign Minister Madhavsinh Solanki told reporters after meeting his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa. "It has to be more active to solve Third World problems." Mr. Musa agreed with Mr. Solanki. "The movement today is not in a satisfactory position... we need to review its principles to make it more capable of facing current challenges," he said. India and Egypt were founder members of the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1950s.

France seeks return of dead hostages' body

PARIS (AP) — France is working with Lebanon, Iran and the United Nations for the return of the body of a French hostage who died in Lebanon, the foreign ministry declared Monday. Foreign ministry spokesman Daniel Bernard refuted charges by Mary Seurat, widow of Oriental scholar Michel Seurat, that the government has done nothing to repatriate her husband's remains. In a letter to Foreign Minister Roland Dumas published in the newspaper Le Monde last week, Mrs. Seurat said she had worked five years for the return of her husband's body. "The list of officials I have appealed to one after the other is a long one... and all I go in return was polite lip service, false assurances, and meaningless courtesies," she wrote. Mr. Bernard claimed that Mr. Dumas had been working for several months to obtain Mr. Seurat's remains.

Tajikistan president to visit Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — The president of Tajikistan will visit Iran shortly on his first foreign trip since independence from the former Soviet Union, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Monday. The agency said the report was broadcast on Radio Dushanbe, the Tajik radio station. It said the radio did not give a date for the visit. Iran has been vying for influence in Tajikistan and the other five newly independent Muslim republics. The Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, visited the six republics in December to promote ties. The Tajik language is a form of Farsi, the main language spoken in Iran. But under Soviet rule, it was written in the Cyrillic alphabet rather than the Arabic lettering used in Iran. IRNA said Iran has agreed to help Tajikistan print textbooks.

Iran to provide Sudan with tractors

CAIRO (AP) — Iran will provide Sudan with 500 tractors and related agricultural machinery in exchange of resin, cotton-threads and livestock, the official Iranian news agency reported. The reported agreement was reached Monday in a meeting held in Tehran between visiting Sudanese Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Abdul Rahim Mahmoud and Iranian Commerce Minister Abdul Hussein Vahhajj on expansion of bilateral ties. The agency quoted Mr. Hamdi as saying that Sudan was going to purchase 500 tractors and related agricultural machinery from Iran and expressed readiness to export resin, cotton-threads and livestock to Iran. Mr. Hamdi also requested setting up direct air and sea links between the two countries to boost trade, and "appreciated the willingness of the Iranian shipping company to carry Sudan's merchandise to Jordan, Syria and Libya," according to the agency. "Vahhajj in reply announced Iran's readiness to provide Sudan with cargo shipping services as requested," IRNA said.

Watanabe meets Kuwait emir

KUWAIT (R) — Japan's Senior Trade Minister Kojo Watanabe met Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Tuesday, the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported. There were no details of their talks, which were attended by Kuwait's Oil Minister Hamoud Abdullah Al-Raqha. Mr. Watanabe was expected to discuss oil supply relations, trade links, technology transfers and the upgrading of economic infrastructure during his tour of Gulf region. He has already visited Saudi Arabia and will travel to the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday. Japan imports nearly two-thirds of its oil needs from Gulf Arab oil exporters and Japanese companies are involved in joint oil projects.

Demjanjuk's family insists he's innocent

CLEVELAND (AP) — For 15 years, John Demjanjuk's wife and three children have never doubted the innocence of the retired Cleveland auto worker who was sentenced to death for being a Nazi monster called "Ivan the Terrible." The trick is to get Israel's supreme court to agree. The court will convene Wednesday to rule on accepting documents that a defense attorney says support claims that Demjanjuk was framed by Israel and the United States. A Nazi camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible" operated the gas chambers at Treblinka in Poland where 850,000 people perished in 1942-1943. Demjanjuk, 72, was convicted in occupied Jerusalem in April 1988 of being that man and was sentenced to death. He appealed in 1989. "If ever there was a David vs. Goliath battle in judicial history, this is it," said Demjanjuk's 26-year-old son, John Jr. "I firmly believe we are going to prevail," he said. "I'm tired of seeing my wife cry herself to sleep in the night," said Demjanjuk's son-in-law, Ed Nishnic. "I mean, this has destroyed her. She wants to show her children to her father. She was in high school when this stuff started." Demjanjuk's family, including his wife, Vera, and daughters Lydia and Irene, have insisted that Demjanjuk is a victim of mistaken identity. The years of allegations and court battles have created a seemingly never-ending nightmare for the family.

Greeks arrest Israeli over smuggled heroin

ATHENS (R) — An Israeli citizen was arrested at the Greek-Turkish border on Tuesday for trying to smuggle in 31 kilograms of heroin, police said. They said the 25-year-old man, who lives in Istanbul, had the drug hidden in his car and was held when he tried to cross the border from Turkey in the northern Evros region. Police said he would be formally charged later this week. No further details were available.

Iraq stresses post-war recovery

BAGHDAD (R) — The Iraqi government, gearing up for the first anniversary of the Gulf war, is gloating over the U.S. recession and telling Iraqis that despite hardship and malnutrition they were the victors.

Living conditions in Iraq, the official media say, are better than in many other countries in the Arab World and elsewhere despite the continuing U.N. trade blockade.

The United States, according to Baghdad's reading of events since the war, is plagued by an economic recession which has pushed millions of Americans into misery.

"As we celebrate, with our heads held high, the first anniversary of the tyrannical 30-state aggression against us, (U.S. President George) Bush... was touring Asian countries looking for a solution to the economic crisis the U.S. is suffering from," Al Thawra, the newspaper of the ruling Baath Party, said Monday.

Almost every night, a large part of Iraqi Television's main evening newscast is taken up by reports on unemployment, homelessness, poverty and crime in the United States.

Iraq's preparations for mass celebrations to mark Friday's anniversary of the beginning of the war have coincided with a switch in emphasis in the media from the crippling effect of sanctions on the economy to Iraqi progress in rebuilding.

At the weekend, Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan inaugurated a new museum devoted to post-war reconstruction. Government officials there said most of Iraq's infrastructure and part of its military-industrial complex had been rebuilt.

They said 75 per cent of the power grid and 85 per cent of oil refining capacity were restored. Of 123 bridges damaged or destroyed in U.S. or allied air strikes, 99 had been repaired.

"They (the United States and

its allies) declared they pushed us back to the pre-industrial age," Al Thawra said. "We hit back by reconstructing all that was destroyed... (and) our legendary resistance to U.N. sanctions has told the whole world the meaning of pride and dignity."

The sanctions were imposed in August, 1990, as punishment for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, an event rarely mentioned here now.

"The embargo has divided Iraqis into a small group with enough money to keep pace with hyperinflation and a majority which has to depend on subsidised rations that cover roughly a third of their nutritional needs."

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the death rate for children under five has doubled, partly because of severe malnutrition.

In a switch of previous policy, which sought to dampen popular hopes for an end to the trade blockade, Iraqi newspapers in the past few days have been full of stories suggesting that international resolve to maintain the embargo is weakening.

Coupled with assertions that Iraq, not its enemies, won the 42-day Gulf war, such reports are clearly designed to lift the spirits of a population which has endured two wars in a decade.

Al Thawra said on Monday the U.S.-led alliance had concealed its losses in the conflict, particularly those incurred during the 100-hour ground war that followed more than a month of bombing raids on Iraq.

"Iraq's enemies fled like frightened rats in the face of the swords of right and principled men..." Al Thawra said.

The United States reported 125 soldiers killed in combat. Almost 200,000 Iraqis died in accidents. Neither Washington nor Baghdad ever released Iraqi casualty figures but U.S. officers have privately estimated between 100,000 and 150,000 combat deaths.

Thousands more died in rebellions which erupted within days

of the ceasefire that ended the Gulf fighting. Loyalist forces crushed the revolts.

Donors hear U.N. plea

The United States pledged \$36 million Monday to help feed, shelter and protect more than half a million Kurds in Iraq over the next six months, relief officials said Monday.

The pledge came after a U.N. appeal for \$145.3 million in such aid. U.N. relief officials presented the latest plan for assistance to needy Iraqis to representatives of some 17 donor governments in Geneva.

The United States was the only country to make an immediate pledge, said Michael Stopford, spokesman for the U.N. aid effort in the Gulf.

Henrik Olesen, in charge of the U.N. aid programme, told the meeting that 560,000 Kurds are displaced and need aid in northern Iraq.

He voiced concern that Iraq is allegedly hampering the flow of emergency supplies to the north and that it has refused to accept a Security Council plan strictly for monitored oil sales to finance the U.N. aid.

U.N. agencies have provided temporary shelter for the Kurds at 36 locations in northern Iraq. More than one million refugees returned to their homes in Iraq from Turkey and Iran last year.

U.N. efforts to aid Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq continue to be stalled, Mr. Stopford has said. Part of the funding is for stationing 500 lightly armed U.N. guards in northern Iraq to protect the Kurds and give them enough confidence not to flood across international borders again.

The aid is also to cover food, shelter and the winter cold, water supplies, sanitation and medicine.

When the plan for the first half of this year was unveiled last week, Mr. Stopford said it was kept to an absolute minimum.

Contributions to the U.N. aid programme fell nearly \$100 million short last year, he said. In last year's budget, pledges and contributions were \$95 million short of the \$416 million target.

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan resigned as U.N. special envoy for the Gulf at the end of last year, Mr. Olesen, who worked in Prince Sadruddin's office, was named temporary replacement for three months.

Italy unblocks small amount

Iraqi funds unblocked by Italy for humanitarian reasons last week amount only to 10 per cent of Baghdad's bank deposits in the country, an Italian Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

When Italy froze all Iraqi assets in Italy in August 1990 immediately after the invasion of Kuwait, Baghdad's Italian investments totalled 13 billion lire (\$11 million).

U.S. denies report

The United States on Tuesday strongly protested an allegation by a leading Turkish newspaper that it was discreetly assisting separatist Kurds in Turkey. The reaction was prompted by a claim by the Istanbul daily Sabah that a U.S. military helicopter was seen dropping supplies to Turkish Kurds rebels in southeastern Turkey on Jan. 10. "Shock: Americans caught red-handed while assisting the PKK rebels," read the banner headline.

A picture showed a CH-47 twin-rotor Chinook helicopter hovering over a field.

A U.S. embassy communique condemned the "false and malicious headline and misleading article." It said: "Nothing was dropped or off-loaded on Turkish territory."

It said the helicopter flew to Iraq on Jan. 10 on a routine mission, dropped its cargo there and returned to base.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Le Monde est a Vous
18:00 News in French
19:15 Documentary
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Teach
21:00 Voice of the Planet
21:30 News in English
22:00 Voices Within

PRAYER TIMES

06:10 Fajr
06:32 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:44 Dhuhr
14:23 Asr
16:57 Maghrib
18:18 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedeh, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623441
Anglican Church Tel. 625363, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 683536
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623424, 624932
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy to cloudy, with rain expected in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom. In the southern parts, it will be partly cloudy. Winds will be westerly moderate to fresh. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 6/9
Aqaba 7/19
Deserts 4/12
Jordan Valley 12/18

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Basim Qudus 646024
Dr. Abdul Majed Saeed 791405
Dr. Ahmad Sunbati 752118
Dr. Abdul Aziz Taboun 785736
First pharmacy 669112
Perdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asama pharmacy 637055
Naroukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salan pharmacy 636750
Yezob pharmacy 644945
Shmeisat pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Abu Baker (-)
Al Shamsa pharmacy (278262)
ZARQA:
Dr. Hashim Hiyasat (-)

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 10, Aqaba 19, Humidity readings: Amman 90 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 611111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 627777
Fire Brigade 812226
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 60821
Hotel Complaints 628800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 874657
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381232
Khafji Maternity, J. Amn. 64626116
Al Khafji Maternity, J. Amn. 64244112
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malles, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisat 66417114
Sunshine Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843945
Al-Musharraf Hospital 66722719
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66416446
Jalal, J. Amn. 77110112
Jalal, J. Amn. 77110112
Atty, Madra 87161115
Queen Alia Hospital

Role of media, government highlighted by Hattab case

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A controversy sparked by the appearance of a Jordanian journalist on Israel television during the Madrid peace conference late last year has turned into not only a legal battle in a court of law but also a political tug-of-war kindled by leftist members of the Lower House of Parliament.

On the legal front, the journalist, Sultan Hattab, has filed a case against his expulsion from the Jordan Press Association (JPA) saying the JPA did not give him an opportunity to defend himself in line with its statutes before terminating his membership.

The first hearing of the case was held Monday at the Higher Court of Justice. The JPA lawyer, Hussein Mjalli — a member of Parliament — asked for and secured a one-week postponement. The case will be heard next Monday.

Politics between the legislative and executive authorities were brought into the fray on Sunday when leftist Deputy Fakhri Kassar, during a House session, interpreted a letter from the Ministry of Information to the JPA on the Hattab

case as "government interference in the affairs of a people's organisation."

The letter, according to Mr. Kassar, a journalist himself, asked the JPA to "repeal" its decision to expel Mr. Hattab. The deputy said such a stand by the ministry meant "interference."

Mahmoud Al Sharif, the information minister, rejected the accusation, saying that his letter to the association "did not represent any interference with JPA affairs," but an "advice and reminder to the organisation that it acted in violation of its statutes."

"In my capacity as minister of information, I am empowered to bring into the attention of the administration of the Jordan Press Association of the violation and ask them to rectify its performance," Mr. Sharif told the Jordan Times Tuesday.

On the same note, Mr. Sharif pointed out that the statutes of the association also empowered him to dissolve the JPA executive committee and appoint a temporary panel should he find such action fit and necessary.

"Of course I will not even entertain even a thought of

such action," said Mr. Sharif, whose Cabinet appointment in October marked the first time that Jordan ever had a professional journalist as minister of information.

"It is my duty and responsibility as minister of information to inform the JPA that it has violated its own statutes and to advise the association to do the needful to correct its actions," he affirmed. "That is all I did. My good friend, Fakhri Kassar, seems not to have had his facts right."

At the same time, "speaking as a citizen of a democratic country, I also have to say that the whole issue has been blown out of proportion and taken a nasty twist with political implications," said Mr. Sharif.

"Personally, I believe, regardless of whether Mr. Hattab was right or wrong, that if the idea was to punish him, the association should have used other options such as temporary suspension or others as provided for in the JPA statutes," he said.

The association should have set up an investigative body and extended a chance to Mr. Hattab to explain himself before taking any punitive measures, he said.

"I hope they would reconsider their stand and rescind their decision," he added.

Mr. Kassar contended Tuesday that the minister's letter to the JPA was indeed "interference (in JPA affairs) and pressure on the organisation."

"It is a dangerous precedent," he added.

According to the deputy, while the JPA statutes "govern professional ethics and code of conduct," Mr. Hattab's "behaviour (in allowing Israel Television to interview him) went beyond such ethics and code of conduct."

JPA President Hashem Khreisat declined to make any specific comment on the issue, saying the whole matter was "under consideration by the executive committee of the association."

Mr. Hattab, a former chief editor of Sawt Al Shaab, incurred the wrath of leftist writers opposed to peace talks with Israel when he gave the interview to Israel Television in Madrid.

The interview was seen by many Jordanian leftist writers as violating the code of conduct which calls for shunning all contacts with Israeli media.

Mr. Hattab said Tuesday that he was determined to press ahead with the case against JPA to repeal its decision to expel him.

The journalist has defended his interview with Israel Television as aimed at presenting the Jordanian view to the Israeli public. He said it served the Jordanian objective of informing the Israelis of the Kingdom's position.

Many Jordanian activists argue that Israel is only seeking normalisation of relations with the Arab World without properly addressing the Palestinian problem and as such any action seem as normalised relations with the Jewish state should be avoided.

Many others say it is too early for any interaction between the Jordanian and Israeli media since the Jewish state continues to occupy Arab land and the peace process has a long way to go before an acceptable settlement to the core conflict is reached.

Another school of thought counters that Jordanians should take advantage of any access to Israeli media and address the Israeli people on the oppressive policies of their government.

Official denies report of major snowstorm; CDD issues safety guidelines

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Department of Meteorology Tuesday denied that a heavy snowstorm was in the offing and said rumours about such storm were groundless.

Rumours about a heavy snowstorm affecting Jordan and the countries in the eastern Mediterranean region by Jan. 17 are groundless, said department Director Ali Abanda. After careful analysis of the weather conditions, it was clear to the department that Jordan is affected only by a normal weather condition, far lighter than the storms that swept the country last month, said the department director.

At present there is a light depression caused by the flow into the region of relatively cold wind from Turkey, causing light showers to continue through Wednesday and Thursday, said Mr. Abanda.

He said that on Friday, clouds will gradually recede. However, he said, Jordan is still expected to receive more rain during the current season.

Mr. Abanda's remarks contradicted a source at the Meteorology Department Monday who told the Jordan Times that a cold air mass now being formed in the Mediterranean could bring heavy rain and snow on hilly regions in

Jordan by Thursday. Regardless of Mr. Abanda's statement, the Civil Defence Department (CDD) Tuesday issued specific instructions to the public about precautionary measures that should be followed in case of severe weather conditions.

The CDD statement said that the public ought to adopt the following steps whenever storms are expected to affect the country:

1. stocking reasonable quantities of food supplies, like tinned food, flour, sugar and rice.
2. storing reasonable amounts of fuel like kerosene and diesel oil.
3. pregnant women in their ninth month are to report to hospitals and not to wait until the last moment to avert having to deliver in ambulances or other vehicles as happened during the past snowstorm. Expectant women can call at health centres and at private clinics or get help from qualified midwives.
4. immediate pumping of water flooding homes through pumps and removing snow from roofs.
5. keeping sheep and other animals at places away from streams and providing them with animal feed.
6. cooperation among residents of various districts to open roads and remove snow blocking paths

and accumulating on roof tops.

7. acquiring additional blankets for all family members.

8. acquiring a fire extinguisher for the home.

9. civil defence men should only be called on to deal with situations uncontrollable by ordinary citizens.

10. acquiring first aid kits for the home with essential medicines that would be needed in emergencies like burns, antiscorps and ordinary tablets to combat colds. Under no circumstances should toothpaste or ground coffee be used to cover wounds to stop bleeding.

11. safety precautions in handling heaters should be followed.

12. acquiring sound instructions about the use of gas cylinders.

13. acquiring flashlights for the home plus sufficient amounts of candles, and

14. in case of slippery roads one should not venture outdoors or use cars at night or early morning unless in cases of emergency.

The CDD statement gave the following telephone numbers to be called in case of emergency: 193, 198 or 199.

The statement said these measures are precautionary and should be adopted during all rainy seasons.

Decision allows community college students to continue studies

By Iyad Al Waqfi

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Higher Education Council has adopted a mechanism designed to ensure the right of community college graduates to pursue their higher studies at Jordanian universities starting with the 1992-93 academic year.

A council decision taken at a meeting chaired by Minister of Higher Education Awad Khleifat said that in light of the council's discussions of the subject last month and upon recommendations from the council members who took part in the discussions, the council has become convinced of these ideas and with a view to

safeguard public interest the council has taken the following decision:

a. Teachers who hold community college diplomas in education and currently teach at schools run by the Ministry of Education, the Armed Forces, UNRWA and private schools can continue their university education upon recommendation from the Ministry of Education;

b. Community college graduates working in the field of nursing at the Health Ministry or with the Armed Forces can continue their higher education at Jordanian Universities;

c. As of the 1992-93 academic year universities will accept the

first three of each batch of graduates of community colleges. Universities, however, will have the right to evaluate each student's standard depending on the number of credit hours each has obtained, and

d. As of the coming academic year, the minister of higher education will set up a special committee to carry out the new regulations.

The council stressed that community college graduates eligible for such a programme should have acquired at least a 75 per cent grade in their final examination of his college provided universities have room for these students in their required specialisations.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday inspects the facilities at Philadelphia University (Petra photo)

Queen expresses optimism over 1992

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday voiced her optimism over the year 1992, expressing hope that it would be full of blessings and peace for all.

The Queen said that her optimism emanates from her belief in the human spirit and the Jordanian citizens' ability to confront challenges and overcome obstacles in the course of constructing a society enjoying peace, security, stability and progress.

The Queen was speaking after taking part in a tree-planting celebration organised at the grounds of the Philadelphia University joining hundreds of students and faculty members in planting tree saplings.

The Queen voiced her delight over the Jordanian people's deep feeling of partnership and cooperation in the process of building the country and the solidarity among Jordanian family members.

Jordan, she said, has always extended a friendly hand to all countries to work together to attain a better future to be enjoyed by the coming generations.

Referring to the Arbor Day celebrations in the Kingdom, the

Queen urged Jordanian people to plant more trees in all areas of the Kingdom and to work towards achieving the goal of greening Jordan by the year 2000, noting that the heavy rains in the country during this winter season are cause for optimism that Jordan will have a bountiful harvest.

The planting of trees took place at the grounds of the Philadelphia University, located near the main Amman-Jerash road. The Queen toured different sections of the university, which includes faculties of engineering, science, pharmacy, arts, administrative sciences and economics and law as well as laboratories, libraries, restaurants and other facilities and installations.

Philadelphia University, which opened its doors for the first time in the 1991-1992 academic year, offers courses to 250 male and female students taught by 34 teachers.

Chairperson of the university's board of trustees Laila Sharaf expressed hope that the celebration will augur well for the university and the country as a whole in the new year.

Canada gives aid to refugee camp's clinic

By Ica Wahbeh

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — At a ceremony held Tuesday in the Hittin (Schneller) refugee camp for Palestinians, the Canadian ambassador to Jordan, Percy Sherwood, donated \$23,900 to the clinic that provides medical care to residents of the camp.

The clinic, set up with help from Jordanian private doctors, has been operational since April, 1991. It is a Medical Help for Palestinians (MAP) project and its services are complementary to the United Nations Refugees and Works Agency for Palestinians (UNRWA) clinic in the camp, according to Dr. Wadiah Barghout, who keeps the liaison with the London-based MAP.

The clinic has specialised doctors — an improvement over the UNRWA general medicine services — who work for three clinics and a laboratory, he said. The services offered are in the field of gynaecology, dentistry, general medicine and routine lab tests.

"The doctors are very good specialists; all have passed the Jordanian board examinations and are committed to servicing the people in the camp, who are very grateful for this help," said Nadia Alami of Jordan MAP.

MAP, a charity organisation established in Great Britain in 1982 for the relief of poverty and sickness and for the advancement of education amongst refugees, in particular

from Palestine, is non-political. Initially, the organisation's work was concentrated in the Palestinian camps in war-torn Lebanon. With the outbreak of intifada, MAP's attention was turned to the West Bank and Gaza Strip where it now has 50 medical projects.

MAP's voluntary medical team comprises orthopaedic surgeons, neurosurgeons, neurologists, accident and emergency surgeons, specialised nurses, and physiotherapists who work and train the Palestinian medical staff in hospitals and health centres.

Patients are treated regardless of origin, religion or political affiliation for a nominal fee. Medicine is provided free of charge.

In Jordan, a chapter of MAP was registered in Amman in May 1990 under the honorary chairmanship of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. The organisation is chaired by Abdul Majed Shoman and groups several prominent businessmen and health professionals.

MAP's objectives in Jordan are to raise funds for medical care for the Palestinians injured in the occupied territories. Feasibility studies are being conducted to establish three more centres in Baqaa, Jerash and Irbid.

"We are doing our best to help our people, especially in the camps," Mr. Shoman said at the ceremony, thanking, through the ambassador, the Canadian government for the aid provided.

Ministers' immunity to be discussed

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament will hold a session today to discuss a proposal submitted by 13 deputies calling for an amendment to a law on putting Cabinet ministers on trial, according to an announcement Tuesday.

The announcement said that the session, to be chaired by House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat, will also discuss a number of issues, which include the fate of land allotted for projects to be carried out by the Department of Antiquities, expanding telephone services in Ruseifa and the House's Financial Committee's decision endorsing an appendix to the 1988 fiscal budget law.

Court asks for lifting of immunity

The Amman Court of First Instance has sent an official memorandum to Justice Minister Youssef Mbaideen requesting him to ask the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament to lift parliamentary immunity from one of the House's members to enable the court to sue him for giving a JD 16,000 cheque without sufficient funds.

The case surfaced when one of the citizens complained to the court that the deputy concerned gave him a post-dated cheque, without sufficient funds. Upon the maturity of the cheque, the citizen wanted to cash the cheque from the bank where the cheque was drawn but found no funds. Therefore, he filed a court case against that deputy.

Under Article 86, paragraph A of the constitution, no member of Parliament can be detained or sued while the House is in session unless the House takes a decision by an absolute majority that there was good reason for detaining or suing him or unless he is found guilty or personally involved in a criminal case.

HOME NEWS, IN BRIEF

King Hassan praises strong ties

RABAT (Petra) — His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco Tuesday praised the excellent Jordanian Moroccan relations and the unique relations linking him with His Majesty King Hussein. King Hassan's statement was made during an audience with Jordan's newly appointed ambassador Adnan Al Talhoumi, who presented his credentials to the Moroccan monarch. Mr. Talhoumi conveyed to King Hassan the greetings of King Hussein and his best wishes for him and the Moroccan people. King Hassan requested Mr. Talhoumi to convey his greetings and appreciation to King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

ASMFC names new chairman

AMMAN (Petra) — The Arab Stock Markets Federation Council (ASMFC) Tuesday elected Amman Financial Markets (AFM) General Manager Unmaya Touqan as chairman of the council.

RSS, Yemeni and Libyan delegations discuss cooperation; RSS hosts solar workshop

AMMAN (Petra) — Scopes of cooperation between the Royal Scientific Society and both Yemen and Libya will be the main topic of discussion between RSS officials and two visiting delegations from Yemen and Libya.

Head of the Yemeni delegation Abdul Ilah Al-Dumeini, who is also the undersecretary of the Ministry of Development and Reconstruction, said his visit to Jordan falls within the protocol signed last year between Jordan and Yemen. The protocol provides, among other things, that the RSS prepare technical and standard specifications as well as construction codes for Yemen.

He said that the RSS's construction research centre has prepared 32 codes which were found suitable for Yemen. These codes are set to save Yemen the time, energy and effort needed to attain the stage Jordan has reached in this area, he said.

The Yemeni official added that

his week-long visit to Jordan was aimed at drawing up an initial plan on the technical and standard specifications for construction in Yemen.

Dr. Omar Al Badri, member of the Libyan delegation currently visiting Jordan, praised the role played by the RSS in designing plans for the housing units in Libya, saying that the RSS designs depend on local material, expertise and labour force. He pointed out that the RSS's designs contribute to saving time and money and enables families to build their own houses after buying the necessary building material.

He also said that the RSS's Construction Research Centre and the other Arab construction research centres have saved Arabs \$200 billion in the form of contracts with foreign companies during the 1990s.

RSS hosting workshop

The RSS is currently hosting a 10-day Goal Oriented Planning Workshop aimed at discussing means of installing and operating a solar collector testing facility in India, the RSS said in a press release.

The workshop will tackle means of installing a solar collector testing facility in India, training of Indian personnel working in this field, operation methods, and cooperation aspects between the Indian Solar Energy Centre and the industries involved in the field with the aim of improving their products, in light of the Jordanian experience in this regard, according to the release.

German parliament member to seek assistance for Kingdom

AMMAN (J.T.) — A German member of Parliament who is currently on a visit to the Kingdom has promised to offer assistance to Jordan in the field of vocational training for job seekers, providing special programmes for women to improve their families' income.

The German deputy, Katherine Ackermann, made the offer in a statement during a meeting with Lower House of Parliament members led by Dr. Abdullah Alakaleh, chairman of the House's Financial Committee.

Mrs. Ackermann said that she would work towards ensuring such vocational training programmes benefiting job seekers, college graduates and handicapped persons with special attention to women to help them earn a living and augment their families' income.

At the meeting, a general agreement was reached on working plans to help meet Jordan's needs before submitting them to the concerned German authorities in the coming few days for approval.

JEA prepares rules of conduct

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) has prepared a draft set of regulations and rules pertaining to engineering practices in Jordan, defining the terms of reference of the profession, engineers' responsibilities and relations among engineers and the JEA.

The announcement was made by JEA President Ismail Bawish, who said that the new set of rules regulates relations between practicing engineers and the public, a long-sought objective. The draft set of rules will be submitted to the JEA general board meeting

Wednesday for a final reading before being referred to the minister of public works and housing and the government.

Mr. Bawish said that the draft set of rules aims at organising professional practice in all branches of engineering, including mining.

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For more information, please call Restoration Committee Secretary/Director of Al Aqsa Mosque, Ministry of Awqaf & Islamic Affairs, Amman — Jabal Al Husseln, P.O.Box 659, Fax: 602254, Tel.: 666141-5

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Economic Forum

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

Specification of savings

SAVINGS are funds used to finance investments. It is this task that earns them their identity. Funds saved but not invested, such as those hidden under mattresses, do not qualify as savings but as hoardings. The latter are really a very endangered species which we can afford to drop from modern economic analysis.

When you earn an income, such as your salary, the rent of a house you lease, a dividend of a stock or a profit of a business, you inevitably use it to finance consumption, current transfers (that is donations or grants to others) and investments (that is the part you save).

In other words you must invest what you save. You do not have to buy a business, start one or buy stocks to qualify as an investor. Lending is an investment; the minute you deposit your savings with a bank or buy a bond you will be undertaking an act of investment. Of course, you may lend your money, interest-free, to your friend or brother. This is an investment but with a zero rate of return.

Transfers play an important role in moulding savings. Now, what is a transfer?

Transfers may be either current or capital. Generally speaking, capital transfers refer to all payments relating to borrowing and lending. Current transfers are grants; they are not required. A loan is a capital transfer but it will change to a current transfer if it is written off.

When you receive a current transfer, say a grant from your father, you become the owner of the grant money and use it freely

to finance your expenses, but it does not form part of your income. It is rather an integral part of your current revenue which also includes your income, that is the money value of the goods and services which you yourself generated.

If your current revenues are made up solely of your salary of say JD 1,000 a year, you can spend a maximum of JD 1,000 on consumption. Assume you did just that, so that your savings amounted to zero. If the grant you received from your father were JD 200 and you spent JD 100 more on consumption your savings would be JD 100; that is the difference between your current revenues (JD 1,000 + JD 200) and your current expenditures, made up, in this case, only of your consumption expenditures which totalled JD 1,000. If you, yourself, give your brother a grant of JD 30, your current expenditures will increase by JD 30 and your savings will consequently drop down to JD 70. Savings are the difference between current revenues and current expenditures.

The gravest mistake you may commit here is to calculate your savings by subtracting your consumption expenditures (JD 1,100) from your income (JD 1,000) in which case you end up with negative savings simply because you violated the scientific specification of savings. No wonder you end up with a ridiculous result, you will be JD 100 in the red, or disaving JD 100, when you find JD 70 saved in your pocket or bank account. What you did here was that you committed a mistake of mis-specification. The negative figure of JD 100 is just a deaf, senseless and mostly

illusory figure which has nothing whatsoever to do with your savings because it in no way measures the funds available to you to finance your investments.

That is exactly the sort of mistake which is being committed once and again in Jordan. Jordan receives current transfers from the rest of the world (net) which are not of course part of its national income. To have a correct specification of our savings, our consumption expenditures (C) should be subtracted not only from our national income but from a figure representing national income plus these transfers. National income plus current transfers (net) add up to what the national accountant terms "disposable income."

Some may be puzzled by the national accounts identity which equates consumption expenditures (C) and savings (S) with Y which stands for some form of national income or product, where we write:

$Y = C + S$
Well, in a closed economy, (Y) does refer to either gross domestic product (GDP) or gross national product (GNP) or disposable income because these three aggregates are identical in a closed economy. But they are not so in an open economy where "Y" stands only for disposable income which, again, refers to national income plus net current transfers from the rest of the world. We hope that this explanation will solve the puzzle. Jordan's savings have never been negative as is decisively evident in our national accounts.

Where are the trees?

JORDAN TODAY celebrates Arbor Day. This has been a tradition that the country has kept for the last three decades. Now after more than 30 years of tree planting, the country is still bare. Only the ridge of mountains stretching from Umm Qais to Na'ur is green. From Na'ur down to the Red Sea, save for the Shobak grove of ancient oaks, the mountains are also bare.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 30,000 dunums of land will be planted with three million saplings of trees today. Assuming that every year we plant a lesser number of trees, say just one million, the country should all be covered with green forests. But that is not the case. There seems to be a number of factors why our drive to green the country has so far failed. First, while officials, schoolchildren and ordinary citizens plant trees, many others fell them down. Western Amman, for example, is built on lands that just a few years ago were full of groves of wild and fruit trees. In many instances, people cut down old trees because they either obstruct electricity and telephone lines or because they generate dirt from their falling leaves. Secondly, two trees that get planted require at least three to four years of watering and care, especially in summer, which they do not get. In a dry country like ours, trees need special care and tending without which they wither and die. Third, our soil is not good for growing forest trees. At the Yajouz forest, planted more than 20 years ago, trees barely stand five metres tall.

The whole concept of greening the country needs to be reexamined. One very important priority in this regard is to ban the cutting down of trees for any reason. Another should be a serious study of the soil to determine which trees could be planted where. It must be very expensive to raise three million saplings, to dig three million holes and to water them even once. Our resources should not be wasted on futile ambitions. The Ministry of Agriculture must convince us that its eight-year plan to green the country is viable.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Tuesday reminded the Arabs that the Americans had insisted on Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and that a few months after the Iraqi occupation of the emirate the U.S. launched an aggression on Iraq itself to force it to withdraw. The paper said that the Israelis have been allowed to maintain their occupation of Arab land for 25 years with U.S. backing and help at the military, economic and political levels. With reference to the ongoing peace negotiations, the paper said that the U.S. is not willing to force Israel to comply with the will of the world community and withdraw its forces in implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions but is finding pretext, for Israel to maintain its occupation of Arab lands. The Americans did not allow the Arab states to ensure a peaceful Iraqi withdrawal and preferred to devastate Iraq and kill its people, indirectly protecting Israel and its aggression on the Arab countries, said the paper. It said that the U.S., which still maintains an embargo backed by other nations against Iraq, is condoning Israel's atrocities and giving only lip service to the Arab countries and the Palestinians. The paper said that the Americans are not demanding from Israel to withdraw its forces from the occupied lands and is not insisting that Israel respect the Geneva conventions, but is rather insisting on implementing the so-called new world order with which Washington aims to ensure its supremacy over world affairs, giving Israel and the other allies a free hand in dealing at will with the fate of other nations.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily drew attention to the fact that the residents of Amman have no problem in finding homes to rent or buy since the daily papers are full of advertisements about homes to let or sell. But the great number of advertisements indicate one thing, that the cost of buying or renting homes is so high that only a few can afford to embark on such enterprise, which means that the Amman residents will continue to look for homes in the capital which abounds with vacant flats, said Ahmad Dhiban. Any reader of the daily newspapers can discover that the prices and the rent demanded for the vacant flats are so exorbitant that they could remain empty and uninhabited for a long time, and probably for ever, as long as their owners demand a high price at a time when the Jordanian people struggle under severe economic conditions, the writer said. He said the problem is not the scarcity of flats in Jordan, especially in Amman, but rather in the high prices of these homes that only a few home hunters, including the expatriates, can dare pay. With the return of the expatriates, it was natural to see a great demand for housing, especially in Amman and Zarqa, but the owners, though they built their houses long time ago, at prices of that time, are now insisting on charging high rates as if their homes were built this year, the writer pointed out. He said that thousands of people are looking for homes at reasonable prices and they might be looking for a very long time without any result, unless the government can put an end to the owners' greed.

U.S. press marginally tackles the peace talks, gives prominence to loan to Israel

IN the days leading up to the arrival of the Arab delegations for the resumption of the talks in Washington, U.S. newspapers covered extensively events surrounding the Arab decision to postpone departure in protest over Israel's expulsion order and in order to await the eventual condemnation of Israel's action by the U.N. Security Council. By Wednesday the stage was set for the arrival of the Arab delegations and the resumption of negotiations within days. Indeed all reports throughout this period anticipated that despite their protest, the Arab delegations would return to Washington and continue discussions with the Israelis, even by the end of the week. On Monday, The New York Times quoted Israeli Health Minister Ehud Olmert summing his country's expectation for the Arab delegations: "They will come. Don't worry."

Still, with the Arab delegations' arrival in Washington imminent, Wednesday's newspapers reported the Israelis were already threatening to "pack up and leave" if they had to wait much longer. Negotiator Yossi Ben-Aharon was given wide coverage for

this and others remarks expressing "irritation" with the Arab delay. According to The New York Times, Mr. Ben-Aharon said Israel cannot tolerate a situation in which each round of negotiations is hostage to the latest events on the ground: "There are going to be incidents, attacks, countermeasures and even deportations until we achieve a settlement," Mr. Ben-Aharon said, adding that the talks must continue on a regular schedule despite these.

Though reports on recent events were generally substantial, few ventured into broader analysis. Those that did focused inevitably on the upcoming debate over U.S. loan guarantees to Israel and its potential effect on the peace process. These analyses considered the prospective positions of the Bush administration and Congress, and the revised strategy of pro-Israel lobbyists, in the wake of Israel measures — such as the expulsion order and the approval of a 1992 budget of new funding for settlements — seen by many commentators in the press as likely to affect detrimentally Israel's bid for U.S. guarantees.

Thomas Friedman of The

New York Times was first to draw attention back to the loan guarantees — a subject generally absent from press analyses in the first phase of the bilateral talks — in his report on Sunday. Mr. Friedman suggested that while the postponement of the Arabs' departure was "troubling," U.S. officials "are more worried about another issue that could have a far more lasting and explosive impact on the negotiations: Israel's pending request for \$10 billion in housing loan guarantees to resettle Soviet Jews."

John Goshko of the Washington Post followed suit in a Tuesday report on a meeting between American Jewish leaders and White House Chief of Staff Samuel Skinner: "The loan guarantees — a subject of fierce controversy among Jews and Arabs — could cause serious problems for U.S. efforts to keep the peace process moving forward."

In his analysis of the 1992 U.S. foreign aid programme in Monday's Wall Street Journal, Gerald F. Seib confirmed the significance of the loan guarantee debate. Though Mr. Seib sees "lean" prospects for U.S. foreign aid in 1992, he does not anticipate a cut in annual aid to

Israel. According to Mr. Seib, "the only real foreign aid debate this year is likely to be over whether to give Israel an additional \$10 billion in loan guarantees to build housing for immigrating Soviet Jews."

Wednesday's Washington Times reported that Mr. Ben-Aharon said the Israeli government was in continuous contact with the Bush administration on the subject of the loan guarantees, and moreover, that Israel would not curtail settlement activity in order to secure the guarantees.

In her analysis in Tuesday's Christian Science Monitor, Lami Andoni saw new strength for PLO leaders, particularly chairman Yasser Arafat, stemming from their success in encouraging the other Arab parties to delay their arrival in Washington and in seeking U.N. action against Israel. "Ms. Andoni cited a Jordanian official conceding that, in practice, the Arabs were taking their lead from the Palestinians, especially those inside the occupied territories. Ms. Andoni added that the Palestinians inside the territories have themselves 'given a boost' to the PLO leadership. Mr. Friedman concurred with

this analysis in his report in Wednesday's New York Times: "The fact that the PLO was able to induce all the Arab delegations... to hold off going to Washington until the United Nations censured Israel underscored that Arafat is again exercising substantial influence, not only over the Palestinian delegation, but with all the Arab groups."

An editorial in Sunday's Washington Times entitled "The price of making too much of the Israeli-Palestinian issue," while not particularly significant as it appeared in a less influential newspaper, was nonetheless striking in its attempt to deny the centrality of the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The editorial drew from recent commentaries by Washington Times columnist Norman Podhoretz and Washington Institute for Near East Policy director Martin Indyk, both charging that the U.S. peace effort was misguided in focusing its Middle East policy primarily on a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

As cited in the editorial, Mr. Indyk argued for a U.S. policy aimed at a "collective security" arrangement in the Middle

East. Mr. Indyk said a move towards collective security would involve "the removal of Saddam Hussein from power, the control of weapons of mass destruction, support for greater political participation in Arab states, and encouragement of Arab governments to deal with the basic needs of their constituents." However, he added: "A settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is also essential to that new order, but it should not take precedence in American policy over these other issues on the mistaken assumption that a Palestinian solution alone would remove instability in the region."

Another notable report was George D. Moffett's review of the events surrounding the Arab protest delay in Monday's Christian Science Monitor. Mr. Moffett quoted Jordanian spokesperson Marwan Muser's characterisation of Arab reaction to the faltering peace process: "There was euphoria in the region after Madrid. People thought this was the right thing to do. Now there's a very pessimistic feeling. There's a feeling that Israel is stalling and that the U.S. is not as serious about the process."

The alternative media in the U.S.

By Mustafa M. Tell

IT is a grave mistake to overlook the "alternative media" in the U.S. While the mainstream media in the U.S., such as the New York Times, the Washington Post, NBC, CBS, ABC, CNN, Time Magazine, U.S. News and World Report, offer, and offered, distorted and manipulative information for the people of America and the world, the alternative media offers, and offered, a different view and source of information for the American population about the Palestinian problem, the Gulf war, the Arab World, U.S. foreign and domestic policy, Latin America and the rest of the so-called Third World. Yet this alternative media is not known in Jordan or the Arab World. This, of course, is not the fault of the Jordanian and Arab populace. The fault lies with the U.S. corporate establishment which makes it difficult to discover, and view, the alternative media not only for an outsider, but even for the people in the U.S. This cover-up will be discussed after presenting an overview of the alternative media in the U.S.

What is the alternative media?

In the U.S. there are hundreds of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations. The majority of these are commercial entities owned by major firms with the aim of generating income. Many of these firms own more than just one or two media sources. In fact the majority of the media sources in the U.S. are owned by a handful of firms. For example, in 1989 there were 1,643 daily newspapers in the U.S. All these daily newspapers were controlled by only 14 firms. One of the largest firms is Gannett Company which publishes USA Today and 87 other dailies. In Philadelphia, the two "competing" daily newspapers, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News, are owned by the same firm and come out from the same building? The firm that owns these two papers, Knight-Ridder Inc., owns 27

more daily newspapers including the Miami Herald. (Some of this information came from a book entitled The Media Monopoly, by Ben H. Bagdikian).

The concentration of the media sources and outlets does not stop with the daily newspapers. Many of the firms that own daily newspapers also own magazines, book publishing houses, radio and television stations. This concentration in the ownership of the media in the hands of a few major corporations brings serious doubts about the idea of free and uncensored media and makes the U.S. mainstream media worthy of its Corporation Media designation. It is obvious that no matter how free and uncensored the U.S. mainstream media claims to be, the agenda is always dictated by the corporations that own the media outlets and sources. Facing this background, many people in the U.S. who do not approve of the corporate agenda for the media and who have a view that is not allowed to see the light in the mainstream press, realised that they needed their own media outlets. From that realisation the alternative media was born.

The alternative media is not an opposition media. It does not support one party against the other because it refuses to play the illusions of the political game between the Democrats and Republicans. This view is represented by the words of the famous MIT professor Noam Chomsky who said about the political life in the U.S.: "There is essentially no political party, the business party, with two factions. Shifting coalitions of investors account for a large part of political history." This statement can be used as the dividing line between the corporate (mainstream) media and the independent (alternative) media. While the majority in the alternative media accepts and subscribes to Chomsky's statement, the majority in the mainstream media does not. Of course, this is not the only difference between the mainstream media and the alternative media. While the majority of the

mainstream media outlets are owned by corporations and firms, the majority of the alternative media outlets are owned by individuals, non-profit organisations, students and community groups. This allows the alternative media to have an independent agenda and opinion which is a luxury the mainstream media can not afford.

Some examples from the alternative media

The alternative media in the U.S. is strong in magazines and newspapers, weak in radio and struggling in television. This reflects the high costs of operating and running television or radio stations as compared to publishing a newspaper or magazine.

Alternative television stations exist only in the major cities in the U.S. and generally they are limited in their ability to attract an audience and in their programmes because of financial restraints. WYBE channel 35 is an example of alternative television station. It is the only alternative television station in the city of Philadelphia, although Philadelphia is the second largest city on the eastern coast of the U.S. (after New York). The station depends on donations and subscriptions to survive and compared to most of the commercial, mainstream, television stations that broadcast for most of the day, WYBE broadcasts for only a few hours. Yet this station is much better than the most of the other stations here in Philadelphia because it offers programmes that cannot be found anywhere else, such as independent films from all over the world, alternative news sources, community forums, Asian news coverage, European journals, experimental television programmes, and much more. The problem with WYBE is that only a few people in Philadelphia know about it. This is because WYBE has a weak signal that cannot cover all of Philadelphia and because the two major cable companies refuse to carry WYBE signal with their service.

Alternative radio fares better

than alternative television in the U.S. Alternative radio stations can be found in most major cities and in many college towns. One of the best alternative radio stations in the U.S. is WMNF from Tampa, Florida. This station was established in the early 1970s by a group of activists in the south Florida area. The station is very popular and manages to get thousands of dollars in donations every year. WMNF was one of the very few stations that gave good coverage to the anti-Gulf war movement in the U.S. and, while the rest of the radio stations were glorifying the U.S. military power, WMNF was talking about the human toll of the war and the many civilian victims. In Philadelphia there are a few public radio stations. A distinction between public stations and alternative stations must be clarified here. Not all public stations can be considered alternative stations because although many public stations may provide alternative cultural and art coverage, not all provide alternative political and social coverage. WXPB in Philadelphia is a good example. This radio station broadcasts from the University of Pennsylvania campus. The station's political agenda is very conservative even though it is a public station. This reflects the fact that the University of Pennsylvania is an elite and conservative school. WKDU, on the other hand, can be considered an alternative station. This station broadcasts from Drexel University. It has a very strong and informative news programme and always provides an alternative view for its listeners.

The best examples for the alternative media are found in newspapers and magazines. Unlike radio and television, newspapers and magazines are relatively cheap to produce and distribute, which, in the case of alternative media, gives alternative newspapers and magazines an edge over alternative radio and television. This economical factor also gives the printed media more independence and freedom. Here are some examples from the alternative press:

The Village Voice: This weekly newspaper, is a strange case. On the one hand, it is published by a major corporation and depends on advertisement for its survival. On the other hand, it has a very radical and alternative news coverage. The Voice, as it is known in the U.S., is published in New York and distributed all over the country. By far, it is the most distributed paper with alternative views.

Unfortunately, most of the Voice readers pick up the Voice for its cultural and art coverage. The paper is famous for its art sections which leave a small room for political coverage, yet this small room is well spent and very interesting. The problem of the Voice is that one has to search between all the adds and the art/cultural sections to find a political story and in many cases the stories are local New York stories.

The Nation: The oldest alternative magazine in the U.S. It was first published in 1865. The Nation is published weekly from New York and distributed all over the U.S. It is very academic magazine which makes it difficult for many of the young people to read it. The Nation is very informative and full of interesting news and articles. The Nation has a limited and selective advertisement in it. This gives it unlimited freedom to publish anything without any fear of losing any advertisement, because it does not depend on it for its survival.

Une Reader: A great introduction to the alternative press. It is a monthly collection of articles that are published in the rest of the alternative press. Une Reader is published in Minneapolis and distributed all over the U.S. This magazine has been losing its radical edge lately. This may be a reflection of the increase of advertisement in it. The magazine is moving toward more social and cultural themes and abandoning the political theme. Still, it is a great magazine and can introduce its reader to the rest of the alternative press.

Lies of Our Times: A very interesting magazine. This maga-

zine is published monthly from New York. The theme of this magazine is "a magazine to correct the record." Basically, this magazine analysis the mainstream media to show how it lies and manipulates the people of the U.S. This magazine had some great articles during the Gulf war and the U.S. invasion of Panama. There are two problems with Lies of Our Times. The first one is its price, of \$3 per issue, the second is its limited theme.

Z Magazine: One of the best alternative magazines in the U.S. It combines the best of all the others that were mentioned above in a single magazine. It is academic, interesting, inexpensive, covers many themes and has many great writers. Z Magazine is published monthly from Boston.

That was a brief summary of some of the alternative media outlets in the U.S. Some other names are: Nonviolent Activist, The Humanist, Real News, The News Service, The Nuclear Resister and The Ecologist. These are mostly single issue magazines. Then there are The Progressive, The Shadow, The Guardian and Mother Jones. These are similar to Z Magazine but not as good. There are also many socialist and Marxist newspapers such as Socialist Action, People's Weekly, The Militant, Revolutionary Worker, and The People. The problem with many of these papers is they are very dogmatic, which turns away many people from reading them.

The difficult search for the alternative media

Most of the alternative newspapers and magazines are very difficult to find. After reading what is in them the reasons for this difficulty become obvious. These newspapers and magazines present to the people of the U.S. a reality that most of the corporate media want to hide. Since the corporate media controls most of the distributing outlets, it

(Continued on page 5)

Concerned mothers head for Iraq with relief aid and a message of peace

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Faye Williams, staff counsel and special assistant to U.S. Congressman Mervyn Dymally of California, was aboard the famous peace ship which set sail from Algeria one year ago, carrying food and medicine as well as a message of peace to the children of Iraq. Unfortunately the mission of 200 women failed because the ship was held up by the allied forces — enforcers of the sanctions against Iraq — on the Arabian Sea for 40 days. "We were ultimately allowed to take some of the food and medicine to Iraq, but we were quickly rushed out of the country because it was just hours before the war began," Ms. Williams recalled Tuesday as she and seven other women prepared to head for Iraq on another mission.

"Maybe we did not totally succeed the first time. But women find a way of doing what is necessary," Ms. Williams told the Jordan Times. "This trip is a necessary trip for me. It is one to say that women can succeed," she added.

The delegation of which Ms. Williams is a member

represents the mainly women's organisation Madre.

Madre, founded in 1983, has about 20,000 members. It addresses U.S. domestic and foreign policies that affect women and children in the U.S., Central America and the Middle East, according to Vivian Stromberg, executive director of Madre and one of its founding members.

"We believe that peace is achievable and that we can see a world of peace, but only if we have justice," said Ms. Stromberg. "We must work to obliterate inequality, racism and war."

Pointing out that "madre" means mother in Spanish, Ms. Stromberg attributed her inspiration for founding the organisation to her familiarity with the mothers of Central America who lost family members in wars that were supported by the United States.

The eight-member delegation, which leaves for Iraq Wednesday, met with the Jordanian Women's Federation on Tuesday to discuss the question of whether women's work really changes things and how should women go about attaining power that would enable them to make changes and

prevent wars.

"The general outcome of the meeting was that it was important not to get too personal (humanitarian) but to engage more women in politics so that they could secure positions to play a major role in economic development and work towards economic power," said Helen Rodriguez-Trías, a physician. Madre opposes the concept of occupying other people's land by force — as is the case with Israel and Palestinian lands.

"We support a kindergarten programme in the West Bank city of Nablus," Ms. Stromberg said. The kindergarten serves 120 families and 170 children.

"The Israelis closed and destroyed the kindergarten three times since it was first built," but Madre refused to give up the project, she said.

One of Madre's top priorities is to lift the U.N. embargo against Iraq.

"The impact of the sanctions on Jordan are far greater than within the borders of Iraq. Even so, Jordan was generous in taking in Palestinians who fled the war," Ms. Stromberg said. "We will bring one tonne of essential material to the Palestinians

victimised by the sanctions in Jordan," she added.

Ms. Stromberg is hoping that millions of people around the world all pool their energies and resources and apply the necessary pressure for the sanctions to be lifted. "We would like to see this horrible and unjust war come to an end because although the bombing is over, the war is not over," she said.

Ms. Williams is currently writing a book on her experience on the peace ship. "I am (documenting) my trip in a book called the 'Peace Terrorists'," she said. "The reason I called it the 'Peace Terrorists' is because we were treated no different from terrorists despite that it was well known that we were a group of women on a peace mission."

Other members of the group are: Maya Miller, who has advocated for the rights of women and children through organisations such as the National Welfare Rights Organisation; Laura Flanders, an independent journalist; Margaret Ratner, a lawyer and writer; and Brenda Murad, the Middle East programme coordinator for Madre.

Formal bilaterals launched

(Continued from page 1)

opinion has become very aware of the issues over the years. And we were all extremely heartened by the response we had from Americans, from Congressmen and so on, about the fact that they will not allow American tax money to be used to fund illegal actions on the part of Israel."

With regards to Israel's expulsion orders against 12 Palestinians, Dr. Ashrawi said the Palestinians have already asked the U.S. to act on the issue. "We were assured that the U.S. is doing everything possible in order to put pressure or prevent the expulsions," she said.

With regards to the U.S. role, the Palestinian spokeswoman said the

Palestinians have always been assured that the U.S. will play a more "substantive" and "effective" role when it comes to negotiations on substance.

Dr. Ashrawi said the transition phase is the focus of the overall broad agenda for the Palestinian-Israeli track. But in order to focus on the transitional phase and to present an ISGA model for serious negotiations, the Palestinians would have to make sure that the proper conditions exist in terms of settlement activity and respect for human rights. She cited assurances in the letter of invitation saying no side will be allowed to stall or exercise under prolongation or to try to create facts or unilateral actions that would undermine the process or predetermine the outcome.

Regarding the multilateral peace talks to be held at the end of this month, Dr. Ashrawi said that since these talks would discuss issues that are outside the occupied territories — issues that pertain to the Palestinian nation and the Palestinian people as a whole — it is not to be legitimate and comprehensive Palestinian representation rather than just a "people delegation" from the occupied territories.

The Israeli-Syrian meetings again achieved no progress, participants said. Israeli-Lebanese talks also resumed but no definite details were immediately available.

Israeli-Syrian talks have been characterised by increasingly tough exchanges of hardline rhetoric, leaving the impression that the parties are lecturing each other on well-known positions rather than engaging in real negotiation.

The Syrians want to discuss the return of the occupied Golan Heights. The Israelis say Syria must first unconditionally accept Israel's right to exist and commit itself to signing a peace treaty.

"We have to bargain over our right to exist. We will not bargain on our right to exist," said Israeli delegate Yossi Ben Aharon. Syrian counterpart Mowaffaq Al Akhal said this was "putting the cart before the horse" and insisted Israel must first commit itself to withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Rightists

(Continued from page 1)

offering autonomy. While the 1978 Camp David accords and Israel's own 1989 initiative offered limited self-rule to Palestinians, right-wing parties see autonomy as an opening for a Palestinian state. They have repeatedly said they would quit if autonomy were offered.

Science Minister Yuval Neeman, head of the Tehiya party that advocates annexing the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, said Tuesday he would ask Mr. Shamir to clarify reports on the Washington talks before deciding to leave the cabinet.

Mr. Neeman said on army radio that "if indeed the material shows that the autonomy plan is clear, this means we are entering the substance of negotiations and we have no place in the government."

Mr. Shamir aide Yossi Ahimeir's assurance that no document proposing self-rule had been offered to the Palestinians did not satisfy Mr. Neeman, who demanded Mr. Shamir make a public statement denying autonomy was proposed.

Fellow Tehiya member Genia Cohen insisted the party should pull out now. "What does interim settlement mean — an interim to a Palestinian state... we have nothing to wait for today, no reason to delude ourselves. We must leave the government immediately," Ms. Cohen said on Israel Radio.

Eliakim Rubinstein, head of the Israeli delegation meeting with the joint Jordanian-Palestinian team, stressed on Israel Radio that "details of an interim settlement" had not been presented.

Jordan

(Continued from page 1)

halt in Arab aid. "This is a tax that we have paid and will continue to pay with the hope of a better future."

On Jordanian-Syrian coordination in the context of the current peace process, the King said: "We have always been the first to call and initiate coordination with Arab states. But coordination does not mean taking stands and insisting on them. It means opening the door for dialogue that leads to the aspired results and an agreement on a broad outline."

He stressed that Jordan's relations with Syria were "strong and natural... it has always been like that and were never severed, including on the level of leadership."

He categorically denied earlier speculations that he was considering to dissolve Parliament and call early elections in view of the dramatic changes witnessed on the local, regional and international levels.

"Parliaments serve for four years and this is the third year in the life of Parliament. There is no consideration of a dissolution of Parliament," he said.

U.S. press in low key on peace talks

(Continued from page 4)

makes it difficult for the alternative press to be distributed. To get most of the alternative press, a person must either subscribe to the newspaper or magazine of his/her choice or go to a specialty book store. While the majority of the mainstream media is available almost anywhere, the alternative press has to struggle to get on any news stand. The irony is that while the U.S. population has easy access to violent, pornographic, sport, and detective magazines and newspapers, it has a limited access to the alternative press. The only alternative newspaper that is available on a somewhat large scale is the Village Voice. Of course, this reflects the fact that it is produced by a corporation and its emphasis is on culture and art.

Even in the public and university libraries most of the alternative press is not readily

available. And when it is available, it is very difficult to get unlike the mainstream press. For example, in Temple University in Philadelphia, it is very difficult to get Utne Reader, but not so the Time Magazine. While a person can just pick up Time Magazine from the shelves, that person must go to the special collection department and ask for specific issues of Utne Reader and then read the magazine under surveillance. Of course, most of the alternative press is not even available in Temple University. The Nation is available because it is very academic and most of the students won't touch it. In the University of South Florida, The Nation and Utne Reader are available. Utne Reader is not available in the main library at the main campus, where the majority of the students go and where the departments of political science, international studies

and business are, but in a small distant library in a different campus where the Marine Science Department is.

It is easier to keep the U.S. people away from the alternative radio and television than the alternative press. There are two main reasons behind that. The first is that there are only a few alternative radio and television stations, the second is that when these stations do exist, they are usually very poor and can not compete with the powerful main stream radio and television stations. The case of WYBE that was mentioned before is a very good example.

The worker is a graduate of the Tampa University, in South Florida, where he obtained a B.A. degree in economy and administration. He is preparing for a Masters degree in the U.S.

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McEnroe returns in style; Graf pulls out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE (R) — John McEnroe made a triumphant return to the Australian Open Tuesday after his exit in disgrace two years ago while Steffi Graf provided high drama off court with a stunning last-minute withdrawal.

World number two Graf went down with a viral infection, developed a high fever and pulled out on the second day of the first Grand Slam event of the year.

Her departure for 10 days of complete rest and examination by a German team doctor followed the late withdrawal through injury Monday of sixth seed Pete Sampras.

McEnroe, the brilliant, if still sometimes boorish seven times Grand Slam winner, came back to charm the crowd with a 6-2 6-0 6-1 defeat of Australian Brod Dyke.

McEnroe, thrown out of the open in 1990 for bad behaviour in a fourth-round match, was at his audacious best and his only dissonance was a raised eyebrow and a pointed racket in the third set when he felt a ball should have been called out.

Now a veteran at 31 who has indicated this will be his last year on the circuit, McEnroe dropped just two points in the second set and told reporters later he was still hungry to win.

"It's certainly a long shot (winning a Grand Slam) but if you don't think you have a chance there's no way you can do it," he said.

Injury kept McEnroe away last year but he said it did not worry him returning to Australia. "The only problem I had was afterwards when people tried to sell their newspapers," he said.

If he beats Andrei Aserkasov in Wednesday's second-round match he is likely to meet third-seed Boris Becker, the player he rated as currently the best in the world.

"I'd love to play against Boris... I would be a big underdog playing against him now," McEnroe said.

Graf's exit leaves Monica Seles an even stronger favourite to retain the women's title, though world number three Gabriela Sabatini demonstrated that she may not have it all her own way.

Sabatini, who crushed number five Arantxa Sanchez Vicario to win Sunday's New South Wales Open, kept up her momentum with an emphatic 6-2 6-0 win over France's Julie Halard.

Sabatini, whose only Grand Slam win was the 1990 U.S. Open, said she felt sorry for Graf and was modest about her chances now that her German rival, who was in the same half of

the draw, was out.

"Steffi's one of the top players and I hope it is not too bad. But all the matches are still pretty tough and I'll take every one as it comes," she said.

Halard, ranked 21 in the world, made too many unforced errors as Sabatini ran away with the match.

There was a late centre court contest of high emotion when seventh seed Guy Forget and fellow French Davis Cup hero Henri Leconte battled for nearly four hours before Forget won in five sets.

The close friends and winners in a dramatic Davis Cup final over the United States last month embraced each other after the match and walked off arm-in-arm to a standing ovation.

They produced the most exciting match of the tournament with the flamboyant Leconte, cheered on by the crowd, going ahead two sets to one before Forget's fitness and precision ground him down.

Emotions also ran high when success-starved Australian fans willed their local hero Pat Cash, to a first-round victory over Austrian Horst Skoff.

The former Wimbledon champion, ranked 105th but still one of the best volleyers in the game, more than justified his wild card for the tournament with a 6-1 7-5

7-6 (8-6) victory.

Cash faces a stiffer test in the second round against 13th seed Emilio Sanchez of Spain, who beat Peru's Pablo Arraya in 6-3 6-2 6-7 (3-7) 6-3 in the first round.

With Sampras out and Andre Agassi not playing, second seed Jim Courier spearheads the American charge. In his first match the French Open champion had little trouble beating France's Rodolphe Gilbert 6-4 7-6 (7-4) 6-3.

Courier has a great chance of becoming the first American winner here since Brian Teacher in 1980. Sampras was in his half of the draw and Stefan Edberg, Boris Becker and Ivan Lendl are not.

He could also become number one if Edberg loses before the final stages. "I am not worrying too much about that — I'm concentrating on my next match," he told reporters.

Feisty Croatian Goran Ivanisevic, seeded 10th, also won in three sets over Australia's Jason Stoltenberg. The big-serving 20-year-old has pledged he will be less impetuous in 1992.

The win over included a 14-12 tie break in the first set. "I was taking my time. If I continue like this I am much stronger in my mind and I now believe that I can play well," he said.

Jordan tops AP poll for male Athlete of the Year

IN LEADING the Chicago Bulls to the NBA crown last season and being named league and playoff MVP, Michael Jordan had the kind of year most athletes can only dream about.

The recognition he won as arguably the most dominant force in basketball during his seven seasons in the NBA, became official with the awards. On Monday, Jordan added another jewel to his crown, being named as the Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year for 1991. He was thrilled.

"My God, Athlete of the Year," Jordan said when contacted in Deerfield, Illinois, where the Bulls practice. "I've had lots of awards, but when it comes from writers and the media, it's special."

He said he was truly stunned. "I never expected it," he said. "I'm very surprised since I thought all the awards had been handed out. And, I don't take the award lightly."

"I've had lots of honours over the years, and every one is very special to me."

Bulls coach Phil Jackson said those words fit Jordan perfectly. "There are a lot of things that make Michael very special," Jackson said, adding that he also was happy for the recognition it brings the NBA.

"The AP Athlete of the Year award comes on the heels of the Sports Illustrated Award, but it has to be an honour he was to be very proud of," Jackson said of

Jordan. "For whatever reason and I don't know what it is, the NBA does not get too many of these kinds of awards."

Jordan is only the second basketball player to win in the 61-year history of the award. Larry Bird of the Boston Celtics was AP Male Athlete of the Year in 1986.

The 28-year-old Jordan, who rose to prominence when he made the basket that gave North Carolina the 1982 NCAA title, was an easy winner. He got 46 of 122 first-place votes.

AP-member sports writers and broadcasters were asked to vote for three athletes, with a first-place vote worth five points, second three and third one. Jordan, the only player ever to win the NBA's top three awards in the same season, compiled 340 points to 134 for long jumper Mike Powell and 80 for six-time Olympic gold medalist and two-time AP Male Athlete of the Year Carl Lewis.

Powell, who broke Bob Beamon's 23-year-old world long jump record by leaping 29 feet, 4 1/2 inches (8.95 metres) at the World Championships, received 22 first-place votes. Lewis, whose 10-year, 65-meet streak was broken by Powell, offset that in the championships at Tokyo last August by beating Leroy Burrell and breaking his world record for the 100-metre dash with a clocking of 9.86 seconds. Lewis got eight first-place votes.

Seles is AP female athlete of the year

MELBOURNE (AP) — It was a time of glittering triumphs and embarrassing gaffes for Monica Seles, a Grand Slam year with a giant hole in the middle and wild rumours swirling all around.

Yet, in the end, the tall, lanky teen with the grunting ground-strokes stood above all others as the 1991 AP Female Athlete of the Year.

Selected overwhelmingly by sports writers and broadcasters, Seles Tuesday joined a sterling list of athletes since the first award in 1931. Just turned 18, she became the youngest winner since 15-year-old Olympic gold medal gymnast Mary Lou Retton in 1984.

"It means a lot to me because of all the great athletes who have won it, like Florence Griffith Joyner and Jackie Joyner-Kersey," Seles said as she learned of the vote at the Australian Open. "To be in that group, and with Michael Jordan winning the men's award, is a really great feeling."

Seles won all three of the Grand Slams she entered — the Australian, French and U.S. Opens — plus the Virginia Slims Championships while winning a record \$2.5 million and succeeding Steffi Graf as No. 1.

In the balloting, Seles received 72 of 120 first-place votes.

AP-member sports writers and broadcasters were asked to vote for three athletes, with a first-place vote worth five points,

three points for second and one point for third. Seles compiled 432 points. Tied with 114 points were tennis player Martina Navratilova, a two-time winner, and golfer Pat Bradley.

Gymnast Kim Zmeskal was second to Seles in first-place votes. She got 10 and a total of 72 points. Ahead of her in points were golfer Meg Mallon, who got 104, and softball pitcher Debbie Doom with 96.

Roundup on the top 10 in the voting were tennis players Gabriela Sabatini, Graf and Jennifer Capriati, and track star Diane Dixon.

For all Seles' glory, her year was stained when she abruptly withdrew from Wimbledon just before the start, failed to explain her action and went into hiding. That led to rumours of pregnancy and abortion that persisted even after she said she had shin splints.

The episode, followed by her appearance soon afterward at an exhibition where she showed no signs of injury, sullied her once pristine reputation and left her in the eyes of some as a liar, an out-of-control teen, or a manipulative money-grabber.

Suddenly, she wasn't the cute tennis princess, but an outlandish Madonna in sneakers, a "mystery girl" conning the world. She was even booed during her victory speech at the U.S. Open where she thanked Donald Trump for his support.

Soccer bodies recognise ex-Soviet association

GENEVA (Agencies) — World sports bodies have advanced plans for the participation of teams from the ex-Soviet Union in the Winter Olympics, and European soccer matches but say final decisions will depend on the political situation.

International and European soccer authorities Monday recognised the new association formed by eight former Soviet republics and designated it as the official entry at Friday's draw for the European Championship finals in Sweden.

This dashed Italy's hopes of advancing to the June finals by taking over the Soviet berth in the eight-nation tournament.

Meanwhile, top officials from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) met in Lausanne with Vitaly Smirnov, president of the former Soviet Olympic Committee to review preparations for

next month's games in Albertville.

IOC Director-General Francois Carrard said later that athletes were expected to compete under "one team, one delegation, one uniform."

He restated plans for the French name of the team to be Equipe Unifiée, translated into English as Unified Team. It would march under the Olympic flag and the Olympic anthem would be played for winners of gold medals, he said.

But Mr. Carrard stressed this had to meet the approval from Russian President Boris Yeltsin who will meet with IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch Saturday in Moscow.

"If Russia says I want to be on my own with my own team, this might of course reflect on some of the poorer, smaller republics," he

said.

He said plans for Albertville would be subject to change up till the last minute and the IOC's main concern was to help the athletes from the once mighty Soviet sports machine.

After a meeting in Zurich, the International Soccer Federation, FIFA, and its European subsidiary, UEFA, said the Association of Soccer Federation of the Commonwealth of Independent States would be regarded as the successor of the old Soviet Soccer Federation "until further notice."

Eight former Soviet republics voted for the change at the weekend. However, Ukraine — home of some of the best teams — was apparently undecided.

FIFA and UEFA said any player from the area of the former Soviet Union would be entitled to play. A statement said more details on the structure of the new organisation were expected to be ready by Friday's draw for the European finals.

Still undecided is what flag will represent the team.

The Russian Information Agency quoted the president of the new association, Vyacheslav Koloskov, as saying he would help any Commonwealth state apply for individual membership of FIFA.

But he said such a process was likely to take up to two years and a transition organisation was therefore needed in the meantime.

The new Commonwealth Association of Football Federations embracing eight of the 15 former Soviet republics will hold a two-stage league championship this year, TASS News Agency said Monday.

The new association said it would slim down the league competition from three former Soviet divisions with more than 100 teams to just one with 22 teams.

They will be divided into two groups of 11 teams, with five teams from each group qualifying for the final stages of the championship to be played from July 7 to Oct. 31, TASS said.

The qualifying rounds will be played from March 1 to June 30 and each team will play all others in their respective group twice.

The fixture schedule means teams will lose their international players for the closing stages of the first part of the season which clashes with the European championship finals in Sweden between June 10 and 26.

Koloskov, boss of the new governing body, has said the old Soviet national side would compete as the Commonwealth of Independent States in the European Championship finals.

Ukraine, which is starting its own league competition this spring, will release players for the European finals.

Six Ukrainian clubs played in the Soviet first division last year and their absence is sure to deprive the new competition of much of the attractiveness for fans.

The Commonwealth Association incorporates Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Also included are the rebel Russian-speaking Dnestro region of Moldova and the autonomous Georgian region of Abkhazia.

Beside Ukraine the three Baltic states, Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia will not be competing in the new Commonwealth League.

South Africa gears up for international athletics

CAPE TOWN (R) — South Africa, bidding to return to the Olympic Games for the first time since 1960, has filed for membership of the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF).

Gert Le Roux, secretary of the newly formed non-racial controlling body Athletics South Africa (ASA), said applications were also sent to the National Olympic Committee of South Africa and the African Amateur Athletics Confederation.

Return to international competition became possible Sunday when two of the three politically divided athletics bodies abandoned the last shreds of sports apartheid and agreed to unify under the ASA banner.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has said only those sports that have unified under a single, non-racial authority would be invited to the Barcelona Games.

One group, said by the others to represent less than five per cent of South African athletes, boycotted the unity talks but African National Congress

spokesman Steve Tshwete said the ANC would encourage African nations to ignore them and back South Africa's admission to the IAAF.

Newspapers speculated Monday that the country might make its international debut in February at a British Athletics Federation meeting in Glasgow, but Le Roux said nothing had been decided.

"There is no point in trying to jump the gun. Everything depends on whether the IAAF accepts our membership application at its council meeting in Mexico City on Jan. 23 and 24."

"We are sending a delegation to Mexico, but we don't even know whether they will be granted hearing," Le Roux said.

He dismissed news reports from London that a British track and field squad would compete in Cape Town on May 23 and 24, during an Olympic training programme.

"We have not had any invitation and to talk about dates at this stage is utterly premature," he said.

GOREN BRIDGE

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FIND THE RIGHT DISCARDS

Neither vulnerable. East deals.
NORTH
♠ 10 5 4
♥ K 9
♦ J
♣ K J 8 6 4 3 2
EAST
♠ A K Q 9 8 2
♥ J 10 5 3
♦ 10 9 8 6 5 4 2 7 3
♣ A Q
SOUTH
♠ J 7 3
♥ A Q 8 7 6 4 2
♦ A K Q
♣ Void

The bidding:
East South West North
2 ♠ 4 ♠ Pass Pass
Pass

Opening lead: Eight of ♠.
One of the fascinations of bridge is the way the worth of a holding can change. What might look like pure gold one moment can turn into nothing but pyrites the next.
After East's weak two-spade opening bid, South's hand was somewhere between a simple three-heart overcall or a jump to game. The choice depends on the player's nature: aggressive players will bid the game; conservative bidders will pull in their horns. We are charter members of the first group.

The fate of the hand is decided early. East wins the first three tricks with the queen, ace and king of spades. What two discards should West make?

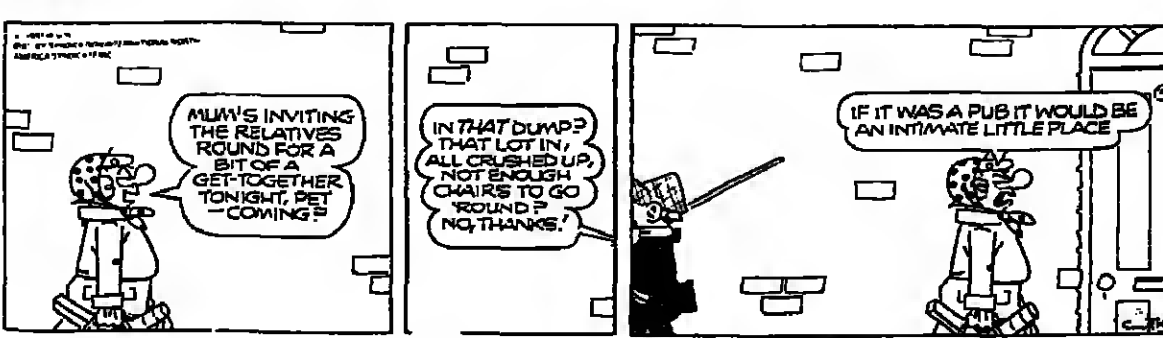
Most defenders would look no further than discarding two low diamonds. East would, therefore, shift to a club at trick four. Declarer would ruff, draw trumps and claim the rest of the tricks, and the cards would be thrown in without anyone giving the matter a second thought.

When this hand was played many years ago, the West cards were held by the flamboyant Harry Fishbein. Realizing it was quite possible declarer was void in clubs, Fishbein unerringly stuffed the two cards that guaranteed the contract's defeat. He parted with what, at the outset, had seemed like his major assets—the queen and ace of clubs!

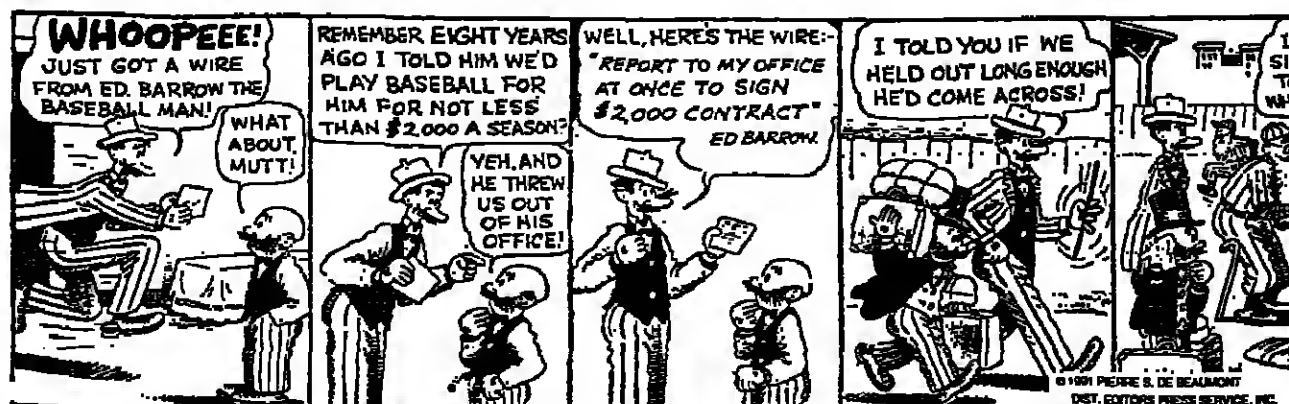
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15, 1992

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Adopting a philosophy of life that can bring you added peace and contentment and boost your emotional happiness adds yet another dimension to your many faceted — capacity for self expression.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get out in the world and do those things which can bring you a better set of circumstances under which to operate in the plan of life you have set for yourself.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Now you are able to find the best means by which you can increase your abundance, have more of this world's goods and generally expand in desirable directions.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Take time now to study the wants and needs of a personal nature of your close companions and aid them to get them by some overt act on your part.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You now need to get a better understanding of the various factors facing you in that plan of action you want to put in effect.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is your day and evening to get out in the social world while having a good time you can also get some interesting assistance for your intimate aims.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Do your best to get one who has the authority to release to you

some equipment, methods you need that can bring you some very satisfactory results for your talents.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Whatever you have in mind in the way of expanding to some new interests or with some persons you have not known before this is fine now so be on the move.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is your day and evening to listen to your intuition has to suggest to you and if you combine it with knowledge already acquired you can be on top.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Now you have some better chance than for something to be with an associate and to find out what the expects of you and to let your own wishes be known.

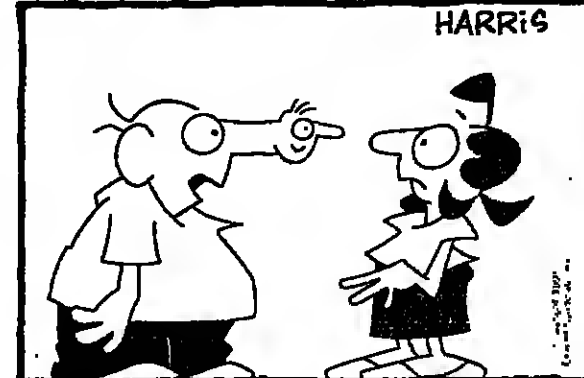
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are able to find the various and manifold tools by which to do whatever work faces you in a highly skillful manner so lose no time but get at jobs facing you.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get rid of whatever tasks facing you as early as possible so you can get together with a charmer for the mutual amusement you like the most.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Look for those highly sought after favours that your family like so much and bestow them on your card willingly and graciously and much happiness reigns.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, available to each square, to form four ordinary words.



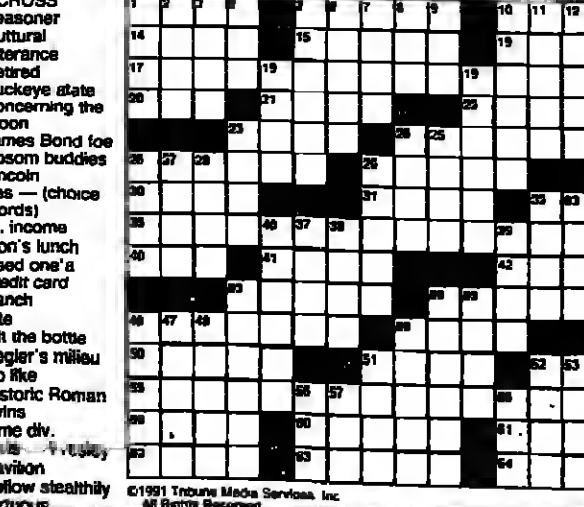
Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: PEACE OLDER DEFAME GRATIS

Answer: With a college education help him to succeed in life — TO SOME "DEGREE"

THE Daily Crossword

by Frank R. Jackson



Yemen asks EC to help tide over Gulf-hit economy

BRUSSELS (R) — Yemen, hit by an influx of about one million expatriate workers ejected from Saudi Arabia during the Gulf crisis, asked the European Community (EC) Monday to help tide its economy over the next few tough years.

Yemen's vice-minister for planning and development, Mutaher Al Saeedi, said after a meeting with the EC's executive commission that the Red Sea nation hoped oil revenue and other income would start flowing by the middle of the decade.

"We are not a helpless country... we don't need 20 years," he told journalists after the first talks with the EC since the two former Yemeni states merged in 1990 and Marxism was abandoned.

A couple of years of the right sort of financial help would mean Yemen "could be transformed into a good partner that you can do business with," Mr. Al Saeedi said. "Any support now will have a great impact."

Saudi Arabia ejected an estimated one million Yemeni expatriate workers due to Yemen's perceived support for Iraq before and during the 1991 Gulf war.

The economy has also been hurt by recent drought and other natural disasters and the costs of reunification. Yemen needs immediate help to create jobs and medium-term resources to get the economy going again, Mr. Al Saeedi said.

He added Yemen wanted the EC to cooperate in areas from agriculture and water supply to

education and science, but gave no detailed figures for aid requirements.

The director of the executive EC commission's external relations department, Eberhard Rhein, said Community funding, totalling 16 million ECUS (\$20 million) since reunification, had been minimal compared to Yemen's needs.

While Monday's meeting was not a forum for deciding on fresh funds, the commission had agreed to send a mission to explore potential cooperation to expand the fishing industry, he said.

The executive commission had also begun talks on possible EC cooperation on Yemen's plans for a free trade and processing zone at the Red Sea port of Aden, Mr. Rhein added.

Finland tops list as most expensive OECD country

HELSINKI, Finland (AP) — Finland has overtaken Norway as the most expensive Western country, according to a study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Central Statistical Office said Monday.

In 1990, Finns paid over 60 per cent more for their bread and dairy products than the Britons, the office said, citing figures from the OECD Purchasing Power Parities Report.

With Finland's price level set at 100 points, the second most expensive country was Norway at 97, followed by Denmark at 92, Sweden at 90 and Japan 80, the agency said.

The OECD report, to be published in January, is based on data collected from 1987 to 1990 in the 24 OECD countries which include western Europe, the United States, Canada and Japan.

In 1985, Norway led the field as the most expensive industrialised country, followed by Finland, Sweden, Denmark and the United States.

On Wednesday, a litre (2.1 pints) of milk cost 4.30 markka (\$1.00) in a central Helsinki store.

A kilogramme of butter was 36 markka (\$3.82 per pound), white bread cost 23.95 markka a kilogramme (\$2.55 per pound) and a kilogramme of tenderloin fetched 208 markka (\$22.10 per pound).

Alcohol was three times as expensive in Finland as in other OECD countries on average, the statistics office said.

In the state-owned alcohol monopoly stores, a bottle of Scotch whisky costs 195 markka (\$45.00).

Armenia applies to join IMF

WASHINGTON (AP) — The former Soviet republic of Armenia has applied for membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the institution announced Monday. Last week, applications were announced from Russia, the largest of the republics, and Azerbaijan, Armenia's neighbour. Ukraine had applied earlier. Under former President Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union had applied for the whole country. But the United States, the most influential of the 156 member governments, resisted consideration of the Soviet bid. Membership in the fund brings membership almost automatically in its sister organisation, the World Bank.

Taiwan tops the world in foreign exchange reserves

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$10 billion last year to hit a record high of \$82 billion by the end of 1991, the central bank governor said Tuesday.

"In terms of central bank holdings, our reserves are the world's largest," Samuel Shieh said in a telephone interview.

"Our central bank has joined the world's big league among central banks," Lin Shou-Hsiang, an economist at Chung Hwa Institution for Economic Research, said.

Taiwan's currency reserves, mainly in U.S. dollars, yen and marks, were \$72.4 billion by the end of 1990. The previous yearly record high was \$76.7 billion by the end of 1987.

Mr. Shieh attributed the increase to Taiwan's trade surplus in 1991 and interest earnings of its huge currency reserves deposited in about 100 major banks in the United States, Japan and Europe.

Another central bank official said the recent appreciation of the yen and mark also contributed to the increase in Taiwan's reserves as yen and mark holdings accounted for more than 30 per cent of Taiwan's total reserves.

Mr. Shieh said another factor was a slowdown in Taiwan's capital outflow. He said the outflow, mainly for overseas invest-

ment, fell to about \$5 billion in 1991 from \$10.7 billion in 1990.

In terms of foreign exchange assets, Mr. Shieh said the total had exceeded \$92 billion. Gold reserves were worth about \$5 billion. And the central bank lent about \$5 billion to local foreign currency interbank call on market.

Economists said the assets could further rise to about \$100 billion by the end of this year. They said Taiwan's currency reserves would continue to rise but at a slower pace this year.

"The pace of growth in our reserves will be slower this year than in 1991," Shieh Chi, economics professor at National Taiwan University, said.

He attributed the slower increase to a lower trade surplus this year because of expected growth in Taiwan's imports of capital goods.

"It will be a happy headache for us to use our huge reserves," said Hou Chia-Chi, economics professor at Soochow University.

Taiwan is to lift its 43-year ban on gold exports and officials and bullion dealers Monday said the relaxation would turn the island into one of Asia's major gold trading centres.

The Monetary Affairs Bureau said Sunday the cabinet had in principle agreed to remove the ban, paving the way for free

trading in gold for the first since the nationalist government moved to Taiwan in 1949.

"The move is the first step toward a free gold market," Leon Shen, director of the bureau's International Banking Division, said in a telephone interview.

"The lifting of the gold export ban is in line with government efforts to liberalise our market," bureau director general Chen Mu-Tsai said.

He said local banks would be allowed to trade gold and bullion certificates.

Gold exports could start within the next two months after the cabinet finalised the abolition of regulations on gold imports and trading, he said.

Bullion dealers said Taiwan's gold market would be more active after the export liberalisation.

Taiwan permits jewellery shops, precious metal firms and some government agencies to import gold. Individuals are only allowed to bring in a limited amount of gold.

The island was the world's largest gold importer in 1988, buying 354.7 tonnes of gold bars and coins. Imports fell to 160.22 tonnes in 1989 and further to 103.7 tonnes in 1990 before rising again to 111 tonnes to 1991.

Bullion dealers said the export liberalisation could boost

Taiwan's gold imports this year to between 160 and 200 tonnes in calendar 1992.

"The removal of the export ban is positive and will help stimulate bullion trading here," Chen Chi-Chu, vice-president of the International Commercial Bank of China, said.

"Our gold market now still is a lame duck market because of the export ban," said Jack Wu, bullion analyst at the China Trust Precious Metals Corp, Taiwan's largest gold trading firm.

"The liberalisation will help Taiwan move one step further toward becoming a regional financial centre," said David Kao, assistant vice-president of the Union Bank of Switzerland. Bullion dealers said gold prices in Taiwan would be in line with international markets.

"Competition will be keener," said Tong Mei-Hei, vice-president of the Hung Fook Bullion Company, a subsidiary of the Hong Kong-based Chow Tai Fook Jewellery Company.

Bullion dealers said the export liberalisation would eventually lead to the opening of a gold exchange centre and a gold futures market.

"Previously we had been a major gold importer only. But starting this year we will be one of Asia's major trading centres," Mr. Tong said.

France to cut up to 18,000 jobs in its arms industry

PARIS (Agencies) — France's arms industries will cut up to 18,000 jobs this year out of 250,000 people directly employed by public or private weapons makers, defence ministry officials have said.

They were confirming figures published by the newspaper Le Monde which said the numbers could rise to 100,000 lost jobs out of 400,000 if subcontractors and suppliers were included.

Yves Sillard, head of the DGA state arms-making authority, said recently that job losses were expected in weapons industries internationally because of defence budget cuts as a result of the end of the cold war.

Le Monde said French arms makers were seeking defence industry alliances with neighbouring European states, especially Germany, to head off new sales by United States arms industries on the continent.

Le Monde said U.S. arms industries were themselves heavily affected by the international arms sales slowdown and were expected to shed 500,000 jobs from a 3.2 million-strong defence industry workforce by 1995.

Iran, Sudan agree to boost commerce

NICOSIA (R) — Iran and Sudan agreed Monday to boost trade in a further sign of growing ties between the two Muslim countries.

Sudan's minister of finance and economic planning, Abdul Rahim Hamdi, in Tehran to seek Iran's help in overcoming Khartoum's chronic economic difficulties, said Sudan will buy 500 Iranian tractors and other agricultural machinery.

The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted him as saying that Sudan was ready to supply Iran with commodities, including cotton thread and livestock.

He also called for the setting up of air and sea links between the two countries, whose relations strengthened after Sudan's pro-Islamist military leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir toppled a democratically elected government in June 1989.

Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visited Sudan last month, reciprocating a visit by Colonel Bashir early in 1991. IRNA said Mr. Hamdi, who arrived in Tehran Saturday, thanked Iran for its readiness to ship Sudanese exports to Jordan, Syria and Libya.

Iran would also set up a trade fair in Khartoum to sell Iranian products and would supply Sudan with medicine, it said.

Salinas says Mexico recession is over

MEXICO CITY (AP) — President Carlos Salinas de Gortari said Mexico has finally recovered from a decade of recession and his administration will now concentrate on improving education and social conditions.

"From an over-indebted and unbalanced economy, we have passed into one of healthy and disciplined growth," Mr. Salinas said. "For the first time in decades, there will be no government budget deficit but a surplus in 1992."

The next priority is to improve Mexico's system of education, the president told the nation in a televised address.

"We will satisfy equitably the hope of all families that education prepare and equip (children) for work, freedom, democracy and love of country," he said.

Education, improving the environment and opening the economy to foreign imports and investments stand high among Mr. Salinas' priorities to prepare

Mexico for a free trade agreement it is negotiating with the United States and Canada.

When signed, the agreement would set up a huge block of 340 million people with \$6.4 trillion in total annual trade.

A weak area has been Mexico's system of public education, which has been declining for decades, churning out masses of students able to read and write but few other skills to cope in the modern world.

School buildings are decaying, textbooks antiquated, teachers unhappy over low pay and academic records poor. Engineering and the sciences are particularly weak.

Mr. Salinas also promised to pour more money into his national solidarity programme, which aims to raise the living standards of Mexico's millions of poor.

He indicated this was made possible because the economy has been growing annually since 1988 at nearly double Mexico's average two per cent population growth.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One Sterling	1.8080/90	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1484/89	Canadian dollar
	1.5700/10	Deutsche marks
	1.7656/66	Dutch guilders
	1.3952/59	Swiss francs
	32.30/34	Belgian francs
	5.3490/40	French francs
	1184/1185	Italian lire
	126.30/40	Japanese yen
	5.7210/60	Swedish crowns
	6.1730/80	Norwegian crowns
	6.0880/930	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	353.30/353.80	U.S. dollars

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High Court in London approves liquidation of BCCI in Britain

LONDON (R) — A court Tuesday gave the Bank of England the go-ahead to liquidate the British operations of scandal-hit Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).

BCCI was closed last July in a swoop by regulators in 62 countries following allegations of widespread fraud.

The bank, registered in Luxembourg and with headquarters in London, perpetrated "the biggest fraud in the history of world finance," according to one U.S. regulator.

The High Court decision in London in favour of the British central bank's petition to wind up

BCCI was widely expected following a Jan. 3 ruling by a Luxembourg court liquidating BCCI's operations there.

High Court judge Sir Donald Nicholls said BCCI was "plainly and hopelessly insolvent" and winding it up was inevitable.

A court in the Cayman Islands is also expected to approve the liquidation of BCCI overseas Tuesday.

This would allow regulators to dismantle the global BCCI empire, which grew from a bank set up by Pakistani businessman Agha Hassan Abedi in 1972 to avoid an anticipated state takeover of his nation's banking industry.

Russia cuts natural gas supplies to Poland

WARSAW (AP) — Russia has cut by half its deliveries of natural gas to Poland, adding to Warsaw's economic difficulties at a time of labour protests over steep price increases for energy.

Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Andrzej Olechowski said that Russian exporters had informed Polish companies of the reduced delivery levels. He said the cuts were because the government in Moscow had failed to set export quotas for natural resources for 1992.

"We do not consider the situation serious because it is only a result of bureaucratic delays," Mr. Olechowski told the Associated Press in a telephone interview.

Mr. Olechowski said current reserves were sufficient to maintain normal deliveries to homes and factories.

The Solidarity trade union, along with two other major labour federations, staged warning strikes Monday and has called for strikes on Thursday to protest

the Jan. 1 price increases for natural gas, electricity and hot-water heating.

Growing public dissatisfaction with the hardships of free market reforms pose a serious threat to the stability of Poland's three-week-old government of Prime Minister Jan Olszewski.

The price hikes, ranging from 20 per cent to 100 per cent, result from increased expenditures on energy and reduced government subsidies.

Following "energetic" intervention in Moscow, deliveries are expected to return within the next few days to the levels set by a trade agreement between Russia and Poland, Mr. Olechowski said.

After months of uncertainty about trade with the former Soviet Union, which for decades had been Poland's biggest trading partner, the Dec. 24 deal provided for deliveries of 8.1 billion cubic metres of natural gas and five million tonnes of oil in return

with a satisfactory rescue package, forcing regulators to push ahead with the liquidation.

The bank was under controlled administration for six months in Luxembourg and would have revealed to normal working status on Jan. 5 if no decision had been taken by the Luxembourg court.

Regulators there said a run on the bank by depositors might have occurred if it had reopened its doors.

BCCI's provisional liquidators in Britain, accountants Touche Ross, said Monday that a compensation package for depositors would be announced in one month's time.

Touche Ross, which is expected to be appointed as liquidator following Tuesday's High Court decision, had said creditors were likely to get back around 40 per cent of their deposits.

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Every day you meet with
The stars of Haret Abu Awwad Family in their play:
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Cinema Tel: 634144
PHILADELPHIA
Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore in
GHOST
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
Special shows for children on Thursday and Friday at 11:30 a.m.
NINJA TURTLES
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 625155
RAINBOW
Noor Al Sharif & Maali Zayed in
THE SHOUT
(Arabic)
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

First U.N. peace observers arrive in war-torn Yugoslavia

BELGRADE (R) — The first United Nations peace observers arrived in war-torn Yugoslavia Tuesday to oversee a fragile ceasefire which went into effect early this month.

The truce, brokered by U.N. special envoy Cyrus Vance, is the key element in a plan to bring 10,000 U.N. troops to Yugoslavia — the first U.N. force ever deployed in Europe.

But before the troops arrive, the U.N. military liaison officers who flew in Tuesday must confirm the truce is holding. More than 6,000 people have died in fighting between the Yugoslav army and Croatian militias since July.

The mission leader, Colonel John Wilson from Australia, told reporters: "I'll be getting to meet the key personalities in the Yugoslav Federal Army over the next few days."

He arrived in Belgrade with 21 officers. A further 24 U.N. officers are due to arrive in the breakaway Republic of Croatia Tuesday.

A U.N.-brokered truce, the 15th since fighting erupted last July, went into effect on Jan. 3 and has generally held. Two republics, Croatia and Slovenia, declared their independence in June, triggering fighting with the federal army.

Representatives of the Yugoslav Federal Army and Croatia will continue meeting in Hungary for talks to cement the ceasefire, a spokesman for the Hungarian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday.

A second round of talks, sponsored by the European Commu-

ity's monitoring mission in Yugoslavia, will be held on Jan. 21 in the southern town of Pecs, spokesman Janos Herman told a news conference.

Last Saturday the representatives of the army and Croatia agreed in Pecs to meet every seven to 10 days at a neutral place, but they stopped short of naming the venue.

They also said they would establish a liaison mechanism, putting an army representative in Zagreb from Jan. 14 to iron out any misunderstandings as early as possible.

Last week a federal air force jet downed an unarmed EC helicopter over Croatia, killing five crew members in an incident that Belgrade said was caused by lack of information.

The ceasefire, in its 12th day, has halted fighting that has killed 6,000 people since Croatia and Slovenia declared independence last June. The army has supported an uprising by Serbs opposed to an independent Croatia.

In an unconfirmed report Zagreb Radio said Serbian snipers opened fire on EC monitors Monday, six days after five of their colleagues were killed when a Yugoslav army jet blew their helicopter out of the sky.

Even if the truce does hold, deploying 10,000 peacekeepers will be a slow, difficult process. Militant Serb leaders in Croatia — whose forces are meant to be disbanded under the U.N. plan which Serbia and Croatia have approved — have made clear the blue helmets are not welcome.

The expected arrival of the unarmed U.N. observers is on the eve of the EC recognition move, marking the official break-up of the Yugoslav Federation and an end to a 74-year-old dream of forging a fraternal Slavic union between Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

Western diplomats fear the disintegration of the Balkan state of 23.5 million people could fuel rival territorial claims across the Balkans, a patchwork of feuding groups and religions.

The 12-nation Community last month set the Jan. 15 deadline for recognising Croatia, Slovenia and two other republics, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, provided they met commitments on treatment of national minorities.

The Vatican, jumping the gun on Europe, recognised Croatia and Slovenia, both Roman Catholic, Monday.

But many Croats were wary as EC recognition day neared.

"I am not euphoric and I prefer to wait for recognition by all the EC states," Mario Nobile, an adviser to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, told Reuters.

"I feel no great ease. The price was high, too high," he said referring to the estimated 6,000 people killed in six months of conflict.

"In many ways this can be ascribed to the international community for waiting so long," he said.

Meanwhile Greek consulates in Yugoslavia have been instructed to deny visas to Yugoslavs claiming Macedonian nationality, official sources said Tuesday.

The issue over Macedonian nationality arose after the southern Republic of Macedonia declared independence and issued passports to its citizens.

The sources in this northern city and in Athens, the capital, denied Yugoslav press reports that the border with neighbouring Yugoslavia has been closed. One official said that only persons carrying Macedonian passports are banned from entering Greece.

"Greek consulates in Belgrade and in Skopje have been instructed not to issue visas to Yugoslavs claiming Macedonian nationality," said an official source here who asked not to be named.

Greece has reiterated that there is no Macedonian nation. It charges that Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, has usurped the historical Greek name of Macedonia in order to further claims on the neighbouring Greek province of the same name.

Premier Constantine Mitsotakis flew off Tuesday to confer with Serbian officials in Belgrade and German and Italian leaders in Frankfurt and Rome, to clarify Greece's position on republics in Yugoslavia seeking official recognition.

Greece said it will go along with any European Community decision to recognise Slovenia and Croatia. But it would not recognise Macedonia unless it agrees not to use that name and gives constitutional and political guarantees that it has no territorial claims on its neighbour.

Bush blasts critics

WASHINGTON (R) — Two days before his first campaign swing through New Hampshire, President George Bush lashed out at his growing number of critics, calling them "frantic politicians" who prophesied only gloom for the United States.

In a speech heavy with election-year emotion to the American Farm Bureau Federation in Kansas City, Missouri, Mr. Bush defended his 12-day trip to Asia — a target of attacks from rival Democrats and a fellow Republican hoping to unseat him.

He also stepped on his verbal war on trade barriers to U.S. goods, calling on the European Community to lift its "iron curtain" of protectionist farm subsidies.

The president, faced with a fresh drop in his popularity, went strongly on the defensive as he sought to emphasise his leadership in the Gulf war as a defining moment for America.

As a result of that conflict, "we are the undisputed, respected leader of the world," Mr. Bush declared.

"Do not listen to those prophets of doom we hear every night, those frantic politicians, who say we are a second class power," he said in an angry voice.

Mr. Bush's trip to Kansas was the first of three one-day outings this week designed to counter criticism of his Pacific trip seeking trade concessions which took him to Australia, Singapore, South Korea and Japan.

He travels Wednesday to New Hampshire, where the first primary of the November presidential election is being held next month, and on Friday goes to Georgia.

Critics from both political parties and major newspapers have said the tour seeking trade concessions was a farce which achieved little except to demean the United States in the eyes of the world.

Heaped on top of already mounting criticism of his handling of the struggling economy, the widespread criticism of the trip appeared to drive Mr. Bush's ratings down further.

A Gallup poll released Monday by the newspaper USA Today and the CNN Television Network, found Mr. Bush's support among Americans has slipped to 46 per cent — the lowest of his presidency and well below the 90 per cent levels he enjoyed during the Gulf war.

Another poll released in economically depressed New Hampshire Monday said 46 per cent of likely Republican voters there would vote for Bush in the state's Feb. 18 primary.

Thirty per cent said they would vote for his Republican opponent, Pat Buchanan, in the poll conducted by the American Research Group. Campaigning hard in the state, the right-wing Mr. Buchanan has blasted Mr. Bush's Pacific trip as a "farce."

The tumble in popularity comes as Mr. Bush is about to formally announce his intention to seek the Republican Party's nomination for a second four-year term.

Mr. Bush, who is trying to steer the United States towards an economic recovery, told the American Farm Bureau he made the Asian trip to open markets to U.S. products and create jobs.

"Some political critics say I should not have taken this trip at all," Mr. Bush said, speaking of his Asian tour. "They're wrong. I will continue to fight for American jobs everywhere. In these tough times a president should do no less."

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Koreas exchange non-nuclear accords

SEOUL (AP) — South and North Korea Tuesday exchanged signed texts of a historic agreement intended to keep nuclear arms out of their territories and requiring the North to renounce its suspected nuclear weapons programme. Meanwhile, Korean newspapers reported that the United States and North Korea would hold their first-ever meeting of high-ranking officials in New York on Jan. 22. Kim Young Sun, director of the International Department of the (North) Korean Workers Party, will meet with Arnold Kanter, U.S. undersecretary for political affairs, they said. U.S. officials in Seoul confirmed a meeting was planned but could not verify the date.

All U.N. council members to attend summit

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major has said all 15 members of the Security Council had agreed to attend a summit at United Nations Headquarters on Jan. 31. Mr. Major, whose country currently holds the Security Council presidency, was speaking to reporters after talks with visiting U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali during which they discussed an enhanced peace keeping role for the world body. Mr. Major said Russian leader Boris Yeltsin was considering stopping over in London for talks on his way to New York on Jan. 30, although that was not yet confirmed.

Negotiators complete El Salvador pact

UNITED NATIONS (R) — El Salvador government and rebel negotiators announced early Tuesday they had settled all issues for a peace agreement, clearing the way for a formal signing in Mexico City Thursday. They ended four days of talks by setting a complicated timetable for reducing the estimated 55,000-member Salvadoran army and demobilising guerrilla forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). A weary U.N. mediator, assistant Secretary-General Alvaro de Soto, said of the 21-month negotiations: "They were laborious but profoundly satisfactory." Most issues had been settled in an agreement signed on Dec. 31 that paved the way for an end to the country's 12-year-old civil war, which has cost 75,000 lives. Both sides signed a short statement saying they had reached agreement on remaining issues and thus cleared the way toward signing the peace accord.

U.S. to build nuclear-powered rocket

ALBUQUERQUE (AP) — U.S. officials have announced a programme to build nuclear-powered spaceships to help get astronauts to Mars. "This giant leap in technology can be equated to the progress made when man went from riding horses to driving automobiles," said Sen. Pete Domenici, chairman of the ninth symposium on space nuclear power systems being held here this week. Russian scientists were expected to unveil a mockup nuclear rocket engine at the symposium Tuesday. They seek a joint venture with the United States to produce a nuclear engine that could support manned flight to Mars.

'New planets found in Virgo'

ATLANTA, Georgia (R) — Cornell University astronomers have said they expected a new test soon would confirm that a planetary system had been discovered for the first time outside the Earth's solar system. The scientists said in a statement at the American Astronomical Society's annual meeting that the test would expand on last week's report that observations in Puerto Rico and New Mexico thought they found at least two planets orbiting a collapsed star — known as a "Pulsar" — in the constellation Virgo about 1,500 light years from Earth. Several astronomers described those findings from signals gathered by radio telescopes as the best evidence yet of the existence of "families" of planets outside the solar system.

Gandhi's daughter rejects election to party committee

NEW DELHI (R) — The 20-year-old daughter of assassinated Premier Rajiv Gandhi declined Tuesday to accept an appointment in India's ruling Congress Party.

A statement issued by the Gandhi household on behalf of Priyanka said her unopposed election to a party committee in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh was "an expression of affection and regard by the Congress workers for her late father."

"Miss Gandhi is a student whose first priority and preoccupation is to complete her education," it said. "She has, therefore, expressed her inability to accept any such elective position."

Rajiv Gandhi's 44-year-old widow, Sonia, had earlier rejected moves by some Congress leaders to make her party president to succeed her husband and to contest parliamentary elections.

Mr. Gandhi was blown up by a suicide bomber on May 21 last year in the middle of a general election, which returned his Congress party to power.

Reporting Priyanka's election Tuesday, Indian newspapers revived speculation she might carry on the dynasty that has governed India for most of the years since independence from Britain in 1947.

Mr. Gandhi's grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, was prime minister for 17 years. Mr. Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi held power for 15 years until her 1984 assassination by Sikh bodyguards, and Rajiv, her son, ruled for five years until a 1989 election defeat.

New Delhi's elite, seeing a strong likeness in Priyanka to Indira Gandhi, is convinced Rajiv Gandhi was grooming her to succeed him.

Rajiv Gandhi left a son, 21-year-old Rahul, who has studied at Harvard University in the United States and has shown no interest in politics.

Harvard has confirmed reports that Rahul dropped out after his father's death but declined to comment further.

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Reporting Priyanka's election Tuesday, Indian newspapers revived speculation she might carry on the dynasty that has governed India for most of the years since independence from Britain in 1947.

Mr. Gandhi's grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, was prime minister for 17 years. Mr. Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi held power for 15 years until her 1984 assassination by Sikh bodyguards, and Rajiv, her son, ruled for five years until a 1989 election defeat.

New Delhi's elite, seeing a strong likeness in Priyanka to Indira Gandhi, is convinced Rajiv Gandhi was grooming her to succeed him.

Rajiv Gandhi left a son, 21-year-old Rahul, who has studied at Harvard University in the United States and has shown no interest in politics.

Harvard has confirmed reports that Rahul dropped out after his father's death but declined to comment further.

COLUMN

London Security alert halts changing of the guard

LONDON (R) — The ceremonial changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, a major London tourist attraction, was called off Monday morning during a bomb alert. Police said they sealed off the Mall leading to Queen Elizabeth's official London home to search for a possible bomb. A bomb planted by Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas, fighting to end British rule in Northern Ireland, exploded Friday near Prime Minister John Major's office at Number 10 Downing Street. None of the royal family was in the palace Monday. Police said no bomb had been found yet but the search was continuing.

41 prisoners escape from overcrowded Brazil jail

SAO PAULO, Brazil (R) — A group of 41 prisoners broke a hole in the brick wall of their cell at an overcrowded Sao Paulo jail and escaped overnight, a police spokesman said. Police launched a manhunt around the city, said Ailton Ferreira, chief investigator at the 11th District Police Headquarters where the jailbreak took place Sunday night. Mr. Ferreira said he did not know what tools the prisoners used to break through the wall without being detected. The jail was holding 110 prisoners but was built to hold 30. Mr. Ferreira said.

Crocodiles feast on whales

WEIPA, Australia (AP) — Crocodiles feasted Monday on the carcasses of dead whales driven onto a remote north Queensland state beach by a tropical cyclone. The crocodile scavengers moved in on approximately 60 pilot whales who washed ashore south of Weipa over the weekend due to the strong winds and surf caused by the cyclone. Sea eagles also fed on the dead mammals strewn over two kilometres of white sandy beach on the western side of the Cap York peninsula.

3 break into prison by posing as police

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (AP) — Two men and a teenager posed as police officers to get inside a jail in what authorities believe was an attempt to kill witnesses to a mass slaying. After a standoff, the three surrendered without bloodshed. One of the men who broke into the Mahoning County Juvenile Justice centre, Willie Williams, 34, had escaped in October from the county jail, where he was being held on murder charges in the shooting of four men, authorities said. Three youths in the juvenile centre apparently had identified Williams as the triggerman in the Sept. 2 slayings, said Sheriff's Deputy John Tomaino. Asked if Mr. Williams went to the juvenile centre to kill someone, Deputy Tomaino said, "It's hard to say at this point, but I would surmise something like that, yes." Mr. Williams and the two others, armed with a rifle, pistol and explosives, walked into the juvenile centre dressed as police officers and seized a receptionist and sheriff's deputy, Deputy Tomaino said. Law officers surrounded the building and negotiated with Mr. Williams by telephone. He released the hostages after two hours, then surrendered. The others, a 29-year-old Cleveland man and a 16-year-old from Youngstown, surrendered soon afterward, authorities said.

Drunk driver too drunk to drive

FOIX, France (AP) — A court in this southwestern French city gave a suspended sentence to a man charged with drunk driving after deciding that the evidence showed he was too drunk to drive. Police responding to an accident call on Dec. 14 on a country road administered a breath test to the 37-year-old man whose car had collided with a cow. The test showed the man's blood contained more than seven times the level of alcohol that would make someone drunk. Appearing before the court Thursday, the man admitted having consumed several glasses of red wine before the accident. But, he added, after seeing the damage the cow had done to his car: "I took a bottle of cognac from the trunk and drank it all in one gulp." The court accepted this version of events, ruling that the man was simply too drunk to be able to drive, and gave him a two-month suspended sentence.

Yeltsin: Radical reforms to continue

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin defended his government against attacks by a top parliamentary official Tuesday and said radical reforms would continue, TASS News Agency said.

Mr. Yeltsin was speaking just before a visit to the southwestern Russian industrial city of Bryansk, the latest stop in a tour designed to sustain support for reforms that began to bite this month with steep rises in prices of basic goods.

Asked about demands by parliamentary leader Ruslan Khasbulatov that the government he heads should step down, Mr. Yeltsin replied:

"Any leader can have an emotional outburst. You can't change governments like you change gloves."

"It is easier to pass laws than to implement them. I will continue to support the government."

Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, central figure in Mr. Yeltsin's economic reform programme, warned Monday against panic over the price rises. He said living standards would fall for about eight more months but would then level out.

The abolition of state controls, which has allowed prices to rise

between three and 30 times, is due to be followed by large-scale privatisation of industry and land.

Mr. Khasbulatov and Mr. Yeltsin's Deputy Vice-President Alexander Rutskoy argue the reforms were ill-prepared, allowing prices to rise alarmingly without any noticeable improvement in supplies to shops.

They are backed by conservative Communists in the Russian parliament.

But Mr. Yeltsin is unlikely to allow discontent in parliament to hamper his policies. His personal authority will probably enable him to dampen any resistance when the assembly meets Thursday.

If this fails, he enjoys broad power to circumvent it and rule by decree.

Mr. Yeltsin, for the moment, faces his greatest test on the streets, particularly in large industrial cities.

Protest has been limited since the Jan. 2 price rises, but the danger of strikes or demonstrations could rise over the next few weeks when Russians run down stores of food bought at old prices.

As well as meeting factory workers, the president was scheduled Tuesday to visit an area

polluted with radiation since the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster in Ukraine.

Reports from the eastern republic of Kazakhstan suggest serious tensions since recent price rises there. President Nursultan Nazarbayev acted to quell discontent by limiting the cost of bread and milk.

Strikes in Kazakhstan's Karaganda Coal Fields, already running for several days, showed no sign of ending, the newspaper Trud reported.

Meanwhile, Mikhail Gorbachev, three weeks after being forced to resign as president of the now disbanded Soviet Union, returned to work Tuesday as head of a Moscow-based think tank.

Looking subdued but relaxed, Mr. Gorbachev arrived at his International Foundation for Social, Economic and Political Research for talks with former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. After his resignation in December he took a holiday — the first full break from work, he said, in six years.

The organisation, once headed by "father of glasnost" Alexander Yakovlev, is now better known as the "Gorbachev Foundation."

U.N. report on world drug abuse says situation 'grim'

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — Drug abuse has stabilised in Western Europe and North America but appears to be soaring in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere, a world-wide U.N. survey reported Monday.

"The drug abuse situation worldwide remains grim," said the annual survey issued by the Vienna-based International Narcotics Control Board.

"Illicit production, trafficking and abuse of drugs, together with attendant violence and corruption, continue to imperil public health in virtually all countries," it said.

It said cocaine abuse, once limited mainly to the United States and Europe, continued to threaten Africa, the Near and Middle East and Asia as international drug rings expanded markets.

The report praised anti-drug efforts in some opium- and cocaine-producing areas of Asia and Latin America, including the arrest of the chief and many members of Colombia's Medellín cocaine cartel.

But it bemoaned the lack of programmes providing alternative incomes to growers of narcotic crops. It said economic hardships made the highly lucrative drug trade as attractive as ever.

The report also noted that health problems associated with drug abuse have been magnified by the spread of the AIDS virus among intravenous drug users.

A summary of the 47-page report by region:

Europe: Cannabis and heroin use appears to be levelling off in Western Europe, but cocaine abuse is rising. Crack cocaine remains rare, except in the Un-

ited Kingdom.

Political and economic changes in Eastern Europe could hasten the spread of drug abuse, although the relatively high cost of illegal drugs seems to limit consumption now. But trafficking in drugs such as heroin is rising.

Officials in the former Soviet Union estimated that as many as 1.5 million people abused drugs in 1991, a huge increase over the 140,000 reported the previous year, although better reporting could account for much of the difference.

— **North America:** Drug abuse in the United States "appears to have stabilised or decreased," although crack cocaine "continues to pose a major threat." Heroin abuse is rising because of increased supplies, lower prices and higher purity.

More cocaine now arrives via Mexico, which has surpassed Miami as North America's major transshipment point.

Cannabis remains the most-abused drug in Canada. Cocaine use appears to have stabilised after shooting upward. The value of cocaine seized in the first six months of 1991 equalled that of all cocaine seized in the previous 10 years.

— **Africa:** Political and social upheaval hampered government anti-drug efforts, making Africa an attractive and comparatively low-risk transit point for heroin and cocaine traffickers.

That has led to widespread local abuse of those drugs, in addition to abuse of some psychotropic drugs manufactured in Europe.

— **Latin America:** governments of Andean countries struck heavy blows against cocaine car-

rels, but traffickers responded by becoming more innovative. "It is also most worrisome that illicit production now occurs in more countries, and involves not only cocaine but also opiates," the report said.

Argentina is an increasingly popular transit point, as is Panama, which lacks funds for health, police and customs. More than 100 embarkation points exist in Panama for boats crossing from Colombia.

— **Near and Middle East:** Domestic and world demand for opium continues to stimulate production, and local abuse of the drugs is rising.

A resurgence of opium production continues in Afghanistan, with estimates of annual production ranging from 400 tons to more than double that figure.

Massive seizures continue to indicate increased production in Pakistan as well, and there have been signs of growing morphine trafficking in Iran, where a total of 4.4 tons was seized in January and April.

— **East and South East Asia:** Illicit opiate production remained at high levels. China and Burma, the main opium producer, signed an agreement to strengthen border controls, but have not yet stemmed the growth of overland trade routes to Hong Kong.

— **South Asia:** Once-heavy transit of heroin across India from Pakistan en route to Europe appears to have declined, but may be shifting to Eastern Europe as a result of political changes there.

— **Oceania:** Cannabis remains the most widely abused drug in Australia and New Zealand, but seizures of heroin and cocaine have increased.

Hurd to seek nuclear assurances

LONDON (R) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said on Tuesday he was deeply concerned about the control of the Soviet nuclear arsenal and would seek assurances from Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Russia during a visit there this week.

Mr. Hurd said he also wanted Russian assurances that action would be taken to ally Western fears that Soviet nuclear scientists may sell their expertise to unstable Third World regimes.

"Russia isn't powerless (to prevent them leaving)," the Foreign Secretary said in testimony to the British parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. "It is the Russians that must act to control the future of these people."

Meanwhile U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said Monday as many as nine Third World nations, some hostile to the West, could possess nuclear missiles by the year 2000 as a result of the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Cheney told reporters after meeting German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Bonn that the United States would now take into account, when planning for military contingencies, that there might be more nations in the future with nuclear arms than today.

"Over the course of the next several years we will see perhaps 15 or 20 developing nations acquire ballistic missiles," he said. "Some of them already have them."

"By our estimates as many as half of those nations with ballistic missiles may in fact possess nuclear weapons by the end of the century, some eight or nine nations," Cheney said.

Miami Cubans seek clemency for convicted exiles

MIAMI (R) — Families of three Cuban exiles facing the death penalty in Cuba over an anti-Communist mission are trying to drum up support for a bid for clemency from politicians and international human rights groups.

Some human rights groups said they are not taking any formal action until the Cuban Supreme Court reviews the death sentences ordered by a lower court.

The three Cuban-born Miami residents were arrested in a raft on Dec. 29 on the Cuban post. The Cuban government said they were carrying weapons and planned terrorist acts. They were convicted at a trial last Friday.

Family members rallied in Cuba's Little Havana over the weekend and passing motorists honked their horns in sympathy.

Many experts on Cuba were surprised by the harshness of the sentence and several said they believe the government of President Fidel Castro is sending a message to the militant factions of Miami's exile community, who have never abandoned their dream of invading their homeland.

Several Florida politicians have begun a letter-writing campaign on the men's behalf. "They have been taken into a kangaroo court and are about to be executed," said Senator Bob Graham, who hopes the U.N. will put pressure on Cuba.

Stephen Weinstein of the local Amnesty International chapter said his group would protest against the death penalty. Mary Jane Camejo of the America's Watch human rights group said it was studying whether the men had a fair trial.

A local Cuban human rights group, the Information Bureau of the Human Rights Movement in Cuba, wrote to the United Nations and Western Hemisphere leaders asking them to help win clemency for the three men.

The United States Monday called the death sentence excessive, but said it could do little to save the men.

"We did not have access to the details of the investigation or the trial, but it does seem to be, in our opinion, a verdict reached in haste and a sentence disproportionate to the alleged crime," State Department spokeswoman

Margaret Tutwiler told reporters.

"We have made our concerns known to the Cuban government on the basis of basic human rights and judicial process... and will continue to do so," she said.

She noted the United States only had an interests section in Havana, not a full embassy.

Meanwhile Mr. Castro, declaring in a significant shift of policy that "internationalism begins at home," has said Cuba will no longer give military help to revolutionary movements abroad, U.S. analysts said.

The analysts, who attended a conference in Havana on the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, said Mr. Castro made an important speech to the meeting, which debated for three days behind closed doors and was not open to Havana-based correspondents.

Philip Brenner, a U.S. academic and leading expert on Cuban affairs, told reporters after the conference ended Sunday that Mr. Castro had "articulated a new Cuban foreign policy that internationalism begins at home."